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## **Echoes of the Underworld: Manifestations of Death-Related Gods in Early Greek Cult and Literature**

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# Echoes of the Underworld

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*Manifestations of Death-Related Gods in Early Greek Cult and Literature*

Submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Classics

at

King's College London

Ellie Mackin, BA(Hons.), MA.

τίς δ' οἶδεν εἰ τὸ ζῆν μὲν ἔστι κατθανεῖν / τὸ κατθανεῖν δὲ ζῆν κάτω νομίζεται  
Who knows if life is death, and if in the Underworld death is considered life?

-Eur. *fr.* 638 (Kannicht) trans. Collard and Cropp

## Abstract

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This thesis examines mythic representations of death- and Underworld-related divinities in light of contemporary archaic and early classical Greek associated cultic practice. Current scholarly approaches to these so-called 'chthonic' divinities generally adopt a view of the divine framework of the Underworld which places death-related concerns as the primary focus of the divinities concerned. In this project I have looked at Hades, Persephone, Demeter, Hekate and the Moirai and Keres for analysis of this framework. This thesis demonstrates that the death-related functions of these divinities were not the principle factor in their characterisations, but were rather only one aspect of a more nuanced identity. More generally, this thesis demonstrates that the ways that the Greeks viewed death and utilised death-related gods in cultic and literary representations support the idea that the association with death was not the primary aspect of any of these divinities. By investigating the mythic characterisations and cultic realities of these divinities, utilising the methodological approach of thin-coherence, this thesis shows that a more nuanced picture emerges.

This thesis contributes a new approach to the death-related divine, demonstrating primarily that their death-related function is not the primary source of cultic dedication. In cases where a death-related divinity does not receive cultic dedication, or significant cultic dedication, the death-related function found in their mythic profile remains their primary function. I show that death-related gods who receive cultic dedication do so within the remit of other areas of interest, and this is most usually demonstrated in the contrasting tropes death/fertility, death/agriculture, and death/marriage. These tropes are demonstrated in various ritual activities throughout this thesis. Therefore, this project shows that death is an area of concern that permeates the world of the living and is not separate from it.

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# Introduction

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The corpus of ancient Greek mythology is littered with references to death- and Underworld-related divinities, and these so-called 'chthonic' gods are also utilised in cult practice. This study aims to investigate the mythological representations of such divinities in light of their contemporary religious and cultic practice, and to examine the ways in which these divinities influence, and are influenced by, cultic practices. This will be done in the context of archaic and early classical<sup>1</sup> cultic and literary manifestations of these divinities. This will help to elucidate some of the ways that the Greeks might have approached Underworld- or death-related gods in both cultic and non-cultic settings. I do not intend to investigate the process of death, interactions between the living and the (mortal) dead, nor Underworld-themed mythic narratives, as the vast majority of studies on death and the Underworld in ancient Greece focus either primarily on religious ritual and burial practices, or on such mythic narratives.

In this thesis I aim to do three distinct but related things. First, I examine an instance of a well-known and important divinity, Hades, who is virtually absent from both literature and cult. Second, I undertake a thorough investigation into the ways that death-and-Underworld related gods are presented in cult in the Greek world during the archaic and classical periods, including Persephone, Demeter, and Hekate. This examination focuses primarily on practices that are not directly death-related but which utilise death-related mythic tropes and which are directly associated with death-related divinities. Third, it looks at an instance of a set of gods, the Moirai and the Keres, who do not appear prominently in cult, but who do appear in early literature.

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<sup>1</sup> All dates given are BCE unless otherwise stated.

Scholarship of death-related practices and divinities has traditionally focused on burial or funerary rites,<sup>2</sup> the experience of the soul,<sup>3</sup> death-related iconography,<sup>4</sup> or on a 'general overview' of death-related practices in the (usually) archaic to classical Greek world.<sup>5</sup> Smaller studies have been conducted on various aspects of death in the Homeric poems,<sup>6</sup> or on shifting attitudes to death.<sup>7</sup> The aim of this study is to complement previous scholarship while offering a new perspective on the place that death-related gods inhabit within the larger cultic context of religious culture. It does not aim to create a model that amalgamates all local personas and practices into a single category, but rather to map local variation, and to identify where there are possible connections and where differences occur. A model of non-rigid thinly coherent religious communities will be used to interpret the material, including literary, archaeological and epigraphical evidence. Ultimately, this thesis argues that cultic practices are influenced by death-related concepts, and that concepts permeate the religious life of the Greek world in the archaic and classical period to a greater extent than previously explored in scholarship.

### Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is broken into seven chapters, with the main investigation concentrated in the final five chapters. Chapter one presents an overview of methodological considerations needed for a study of this kind. This chapter contains a discussion of Greek religion, along with the definition of some important terms, including 'cult', and a short examination of 'beliefs' in the study of Greek religion. This chapter also includes discussions of local and panhellenic religious practices, within the context

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Kurtz and Boardman 1971; I. Morris 1992, 1987. See below for a closer examination of death, burial and Underworld-related scholarship.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Rohde 1925; Bremmer 1983.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Vermeule 1979.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Garland 1985; Mirto 2012.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Garland 1989, 1981; Morrison 1999.

<sup>7</sup> For example, I. Morris 1989; Sourvinou-Inwood 1981.

of a thinly-coherent system of community networks, the relationship between myth and ritual, and ideas of personification of the divine. The presentation of these methodological considerations will frame the analysis contained within the thesis and allow us to place the examination and conclusions within the proper religious context. Following on from this, chapter two explores what is meant by 'chthonic' cult or 'chthonian' gods. This is framed by an examination of the way the terms have been used in modern scholarship.

Chapters three to seven contain the main analysis of this study, divided into three parts. Chapter three examines Hades, arguably an important divinity for the understanding of the Underworld and 'chthonic' divinities, but virtually absent in both literature and cult. Chapters four, five, and six are focused on Persephone, Demeter, and Hekate, and look at these Underworld-related goddesses in both 'global', or panhellenic, and specific local contexts in order to map mythic and ritual tropes throughout the Greek-speaking world in the archaic and early classical periods. The aim of these chapters is not to demonstrate an overarching systematic approach to 'Greek religious practices' relating to death or underworld tropes. Rather, the purpose is to uncover local variation and to draw some conclusions about the ways that individual Greeks may have utilised Underworld-related divinities in their everyday religious practices. Chapter seven focuses on the Moirai and the Keres. These goddesses have been chosen because of their profile as Underworld divinities who play a prominent role in early Greek literature but do not have a significant profile in later cult.

Any study of this type will necessarily be limited by the size of the project, and I have had to be selective in the divinities I have chosen to discuss. There are many Underworld-dwellers who could have warranted a place in a study on so-called chthonic gods, including Hermes and Charon, who are briefly discussed in chapter two. The choice is somewhat arbitrary, but I have decided to limit discussion to those gods with a direct Underworld role to play within the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. The divinities who appear within the hymn all have strong connections to

the underworld outside the mythic landscape of Persephone's abduction by Hades, and the hymn has often been interpreted as having a strong eschatological leitmotif. The hymn itself will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

### The Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* and Eleusis<sup>8</sup>

The date of the Homeric Hymns is still the subject of debate, although it is likely the *Hymn to Demeter*, one of the four longer Homeric hymns, was composed in something like its current form no earlier than the second quarter of the seventh century.<sup>9</sup> Helene Foley, without naming specific sources, cites 'scholars', who 'argue for a date between 650-550'.<sup>10</sup> The hymn was most likely sung, preceding the recitation of other epic poetry.<sup>11</sup> The hymns generally recount stories about the god in question, whether a birth story, a particular episode in the god's well-known mythic heritage, a challenge faced by the god or similar incident. The *Hymn to Demeter* describes the abduction of Persephone, Demeter's mourning, and the eventual return of the maiden. The hymn can be divided into three rough sections, elucidated by Richardson: The Rape and Demeter's Search; Demeter at the House of Keleos, and The Famine; Return of Persephone, and Instituting of the Mysteries.<sup>12</sup> The form of the poem is as follows:

- 1-3: Opening invocation and establishing subject matter.
- 2-40: Narration of Persephone's abduction by Hades.
- 40-41: Demeter hears Persephone's cry.
- 41-51: Demeter roams the earth looking for Persephone, not eating or drinking.

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<sup>8</sup> Key studies on Eleusis include Clinton 1993; Graf 1974; Janda 2000; Clinton 1992, 1988; Mylonas 1961; Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 1997. Key studies on the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* include: Arthur 1997; Clay 1989; Clinton 1986; Foley 1994; Parker 1991; Richardson 1974.

<sup>9</sup> Richardson 1974: 6.

<sup>10</sup> Foley 1994: 29.

<sup>11</sup> Foley 1994: 28; Parker 1991: 1.

<sup>12</sup> Richardson 1974: 1-2. cf. Clay 1989: 207. cf. Alderink 1982: 1-16. Alderink argues for a four part structure, breaking the pre- and post-revelation narratives at Eleusis into separate sections.

- 51-80: Demeter is assisted by Hekate and, upon request, by Helios.
- 81-89: Helios tells Demeter to remain calm and that he believes the match is a good one for her daughter.
- 90-304: Demeter goes into the house of Keleos and Metaneira in Eleusis, and raises the infant Demophoon.
- 269: (After revealing herself to the household as a goddess) Demeter demands a temple built in her honour.
- 304-314: Demeter, sitting apart from all mortals, inflicts barrenness over the world in mourning for her missing daughter.
- 315-340: Zeus sends the messenger Iris to Demeter in order deliver Zeus' message to return to the world to fertility. After this fails, Zeus sends all the gods, one after another, but she rejects all their advice and relates that she will only relent once her daughter is returned.
- 341-357: Hermes is sent into the Underworld to ask Hades to send back Persephone.
- 358-372: Hades summons Persephone and tells her she is free to leave, and puts his case forward for being a good and proper husband. Persephone leaps up at the opportunity to return to the upper world.
- 373-375: Hades gives Persephone a pomegranate seed to eat, in order to ensure her yearly return to the Underworld.
- 376-386: Hermes drives Persephone back to the upper world in Hades' chariot.
- 387-438: Persephone and Demeter are reunited and Persephone relates the narrative of her abduction to her mother.
- 439-441: Hekate becomes Persephone's servant.

- 442-471: Zeus arranges for Demeter's return to Mount Olympos and decrees that Persephone shall have to spend one third of each year in the Underworld with Hades.
- 472-473: Demeter returns fertility to the earth.
- 474-483: Demeter teaches her Mysteries to Triptolemos, Diokleis, Eumolpos, Keleos and Polyxenios.
- 484-489: Demeter and Persephone return to Mount Olympos.
- 490-495: The poet's final invocation to the goddesses, Demeter – who shall send Ploutos to distribute wealth to men – and Persephone.

Clay begins her study of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* by 'clear[ing] away some scholarly underbrush', that is, the 'relation of the hymn to the Eleusinian cult' which she believes has 'indirectly impeded the study of the poem'.<sup>13</sup> She also conjectures that 'historians of ancient religion have inevitably been drawn to the hymn because it appears to offer significant clues to the best kept secret of antiquity: the sacred Mysteries of the Two Goddesses at Eleusis'.<sup>14</sup> As we shall see in chapter one, the relationship between myth and ritual is not quite clear enough to categorically elucidate the (unknown) rites that occurred during the Eleusinian Mysteries directly from the poem. For example, we cannot know whether initiates fasted for any length of time in imitation of Demeter's own fasting whilst looking for her lost daughter,<sup>15</sup> or if initiates engaged in a purification ritual while seated on a ram-fleece covered stool while veiled, simply because Demeter herself sits on such a stool in such a state, even though there is apparent corroborating iconographical evidence showing famous mythic initiate Herakles in the same kind of pose.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Clay 1989: 202-203.

<sup>14</sup> Clay 1989: 203.

<sup>15</sup> Clay 1989: 204.

<sup>16</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 197-198. Visual representations of Herakles assuming this pose see *LIMC* s.v. Ceres 145, 146. Herakles is also shown in other representations indicative of Eleusis, for example, carrying a purificatory piglet, see Clinton 1992: 78. I use this particular example because it is used in Burkert 1985: 286. It should be noted that these scenes of Herakles' initiation are from the Roman period,

The yearly ascent and descent of Persephone opens, as Clay argues, a path between Mount Olympos and the Underworld – that is, it creates a path on which men can access the gods, both above and below. She goes on to say that ‘human beings still go beneath the earth when they die, but their existence is qualitatively different if they have undergone initiation’.<sup>17</sup> This overplays the eschatological basis of the Mysteries,<sup>18</sup> where the benefit is the relationship forged with the goddesses during life, which means the goddesses – or more likely Persephone only – will be predisposed to the individual. There is a subtle difference in undertaking initiation to create such a relationship between yourself and the divinity and undertaking the same (or similar) initiation rites in order to secure a nice, comfortable afterlife for yourself regardless of the relationship formed with the divinity, or where no specific relationship is cultivated. This does not mean that there was no eschatological reasoning behind individuals undergoing initiation. It is, rather, the concern of relationship-cultivation – which is not inherently eschatological in nature – which I feel is the primary motivation for initiates. There are certainly some Mystery cults in which this forms, or appears to form, the basis for practice. The so-called ‘Orphic’ gold lamellae are evidence for such an idea: initiates (or other worshipers) were buried with tablets that contained instructions to a blessed afterlife, including details of how they may retain their memories from life.<sup>19</sup> Although we are admittedly unaware of the larger cultic context of the tablets, the fact that there are several divinities to whom they are addressed and reference<sup>20</sup> indicates that there was not an overriding cultic idea of a single divinity with whom to form a special relationship.

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cf. Edmonds 2006: 358-359. For Herakles’ role in both the Eleusinian mysteries and in the Lesser Mysteries see Boardman 1975: 6-7.

<sup>17</sup> Clay 1989: 266.

<sup>18</sup> This assumption is quite common, for example: the mysteries ‘were famous for promising a better fate in the afterlife’ (Albinus 2000: 156.) Also notions of the hymn being a ‘record’ for the cultic practices, for example: ‘the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* is the earliest and, for us, the single most important literary record of the Eleusinian Mysteries’. (Walton 1952: 105.)

<sup>19</sup> The gold lamellae will be discussed in more detail in chapter four and appendix one.

<sup>20</sup> Divinities directly addressed include ‘Queen of those below the earth’/‘Queen of the Underworld’, Eukles, Eubouleus, Persephoneia/Persephone, Demeter Chthonia, and Metros Oreias. Other divinities referenced including Dionysos/Bacchios, Mnemosyne, Ouranos, and Ge.

This is not to say that there is no aetiological connection between the *myth* of Persephone's rape, and Demeter's grief, and the Eleusinian Mysteries at all. There are clear overlaps between the two, not least that Demeter pointedly asks for a temple to be constructed in her honour, and teaches Eleusinian citizens of high-standing her mysteries. There may be some element of re-enactment or recreation of Demeter's grief and subsequent joy in the rites that took place during the Mysteries, or of Persephone's journey into and out of the Underworld, and several other ritual acts that occur in the hymn which may have been repeated in the rituals of the Mysteries, such as fasting and veiling.

#### Review of Relevant Literature

Death and funerary rites in archaic and classical Greece have received a significant amount of scholarly attention, particularly in recent years. Many of these studies include a brief treatment of eschatological considerations, but few are wholly concerned with Greek eschatology, and they are normally focused on the passage of the *psyche* into the Underworld, and therefore present (attempted) reconstructions of the beliefs surrounding this particular transition. Funerary practices are often examined through the lens of ritual requirements for entry into the Underworld. Although there may be a shift away from this concept in the ancient evidence, there still appears to be a stigma of dishonour attached to the improper burial of a family member. This section will consider several prominent works on death in the Greek world, in order to establish a context of current scholarship. I will not consider scholarship on individual divinities in this section, as these are included at the beginning of each chapter.

Two notable studies, Garland's 1985 *The Greek Way of Death*, and<sup>21</sup> Johnston's 1999 *Restless Dead*,<sup>22</sup> give systematic analyses of the changing status of the dead. Both focus on the use of *katadesmoi* (curse tablets) in demonstrating this

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<sup>21</sup> Garland 1985.

<sup>22</sup> Johnston 1999.



changing status. Garland begins with a mythic example – Klytaimestra’s enlistment of the Erinyes to avenge her own murder – to show that the deceased were powerless without the aid of divinities. This, he says is demonstrable in society, recognisable in citizen beliefs, in law courts acting on behalf of a murdered citizen, and family members punishing those who had slandered their dead relatives. Fear of punishment from family members, rather than from the slighted dead’s shade, shows how ineffectual the shade was considered. So, *katadesmoi* (curse tablets) are not buried in cemeteries because the dead have any particular power but, rather, because they are useful messengers to the Underworld deities who *are* able to undertake punishing acts against the living. Johnston provides further explanation for this phenomenon, arguing that the use of terms normally found in legal contexts indicate that *katadesmoi* were addressed to deities, including Hekate, Hermes, and Persephone. The shade was only responsible for delivering the request to the divinity being addressed. This, she contends, marks the beginning of the increased importance or shift in influence for both Hekate and Hermes as gods who deal directly with the dead.<sup>23</sup> She also notes the lack of dedication to deities who are, mythically, responsible for requests for vengeance, such as the Erinyes.<sup>24</sup> In *Penelope and the Erinyes*,<sup>25</sup> Johnston notes that the Erinyes do feature on *katadesmoi*, although there are few examples.<sup>26</sup> One such example may be found at DTA 108. There are examples of other vengeance goddesses being invoked on *katadesmoi*, although examples are, again, rare. The Praxidikai, for example, are invoked on two *katadesmoi*.<sup>27</sup> The Erinyes are indisputably Underworld goddesses, who have strong connections to death,<sup>28</sup> and their near absence from the *katadesmoi* have no

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<sup>23</sup> Johnston 1999: 74.

<sup>24</sup> However, in ‘Penelope and the Erinyes’ (140), Johnston does claim that the Erinyes are the subject invoked on curse tablets. Although there are few, an example can be found at DTA 108. Other vengeance goddesses are also found on *katadesmoi*, but again this is rare. For example, we find the Praxidikai on DTA 109 and SGD 170.

<sup>25</sup> Johnston 1994.

<sup>26</sup> Johnston 1994: 140.

<sup>27</sup> DTA 109, SGD 170.

<sup>28</sup> This will be discussed further in chapter five.

bearing on this status. Similarly, as we shall see, Hekate's connection to the Underworld in the archaic and early classical periods is doubtful, and so brief inclusions on the *katadesmoi* do not necessarily indicate a strong affinity for the deceased.

The divinity named on the tablet should be viewed as the supervisor of the curse, rather than its primary enactor.<sup>29</sup> Contrary to Johnston's claims, however, there is contemporary evidence which indicates a direct fear of the deceased themselves, and not just the Underworld gods for whom they might work. For instance, several magic spells contain instructions for warding off the attack of angry ghosts.<sup>30</sup> Although examples date from the fourth century, the text and format of the spells appear to be copied from earlier sources.<sup>31</sup> According to Johnston's hypothesis, the *katadesmoi* indicated increased interaction between the living and the dead in the fifth century. She argues that this shows a fledgling belief in the independent power of the deceased, rather than being 'witless'.<sup>32</sup> There is an increase in the living actively soliciting the dead, specifically in private ritual contexts, and the *katadesmoi* indicate such a shift, as Johnston argues. The use of 'ordinary' dead in ritual contexts does not demonstrate a shift away from Underworld gods being called upon in such contexts. There is no direct evidence that the major gods Underworld gods had been predominantly invoked in the same kinds of circumstances – vengeance, for example – as the deceased.

Sourvinou-Inwood examines the shift in eschatological belief between the Homeric era and the classical period in 'To Die and Enter the House of Hades: Homer, Before and After',<sup>33</sup> She concludes that this shift takes place due to social restructification in the early eighth century, including the change from small, relatively isolated, villages into large, well-connected, settlements. This social reorganisation

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<sup>29</sup> Johnston 1999: 72-73.

<sup>30</sup> Faraone 1991b: 182.

<sup>31</sup> Faraone 1991b: 180.

<sup>32</sup> Johnston 1999: 75, 85-86.

<sup>33</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981. This chapter forms the basis for sections of chapter two: 'Afterlife in the Homeric Poems: Text and Belief' in *'Reading' Greek Death*.

created the *polis*, which was necessitated by a population boom in the closing decades of the Dark Ages and the early archaic period. This facilitated the creation of a more panhellenic mentality, due in part to the reintroduction of writing, which influenced the spread of Homer and Hesiod's works throughout the Greek world. This also promotes Homeric and Hesiodic ideas about the gods, religion, and death, although individual societies would also influence the belief systems represented in the poems, through subtle changes to the text during recitation. As such, the extant versions of the texts represent an amalgamation of ideas from various settlements, and therefore the views about death and dying expressed within them are not the ideology of a singular people, but are instead a conflation of beliefs which, Sourvinou-Inwood comments, loosely 'corresponds to the actual nexus of attitudes of the eighth century'.<sup>34</sup> *'Reading' Greek Death* treats this 'conflation' of ideologies as a single religious system, with the exception of *Odyssey* twenty-four. Sourvinou-Inwood purposefully takes this approach in order to view the Homeric 'system' as an artificial structure, one created by a poet who was simultaneously influenced by both older and newer ideologies.<sup>35</sup> These two ideas, while complementary, actually address two separate issues. The first is the gradual change affected by slightly difference on a pre-existing text, and the second relates more to the influences on the author of the text, at the time of composition. No doubt both scenarios are possible, although it seems more probable that nuance was imposed upon the text gradually over multiple recitations, before our extant version was set down.

Sourvinou-Inwood's assertion about population expansion and social change directly affecting beliefs about death is challenged by Morris' article, 'Attitudes toward Death in Archaic Greece'. He argues that 'urbanisation', as described by Sourvinou-Inwood, is an inappropriate conceptualisation of social

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<sup>34</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 16. Although, she comments, this conflation is further complicated by the probability of multiple authors, both before and after writing of the poems, changing elements found within the poems to facilitate their accessibility to the contemporary audience to which they were being performed. See also Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 12-13.

<sup>35</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 14.

stratification for early Greeks, and considers her analogy of Medieval France to be misguided.<sup>36</sup> He also challenges Sourvinou-Inwood's arguments regarding personal salvation and the afterlife, the visibility of changing attitudes within the Homeric epics, the dubiousness of 'personal salvation' implicit in Mystery Cults, and the changing topography of Hades. Regarding Mystery Cults, he points out that 'these new ideas affected only part of the eschatology of a very limited group',<sup>37</sup> and this is correct to an extent. The changing eschatological beliefs affected by increased participation in Mystery Cults would have had an influence on the wider community, but this may have been limited. Morris also contests Sourvinou-Inwood's methodological choices, particularly her reliance on Airès concept of 'Tamed Death' – in which death is viewed with familiarity and acceptance -- and the simplicity with which this system renders the complex and changing landscape of death related beliefs in early Greece. This methodology is reasserted and refined by Sourvinou-Inwood in her 1995 book *'Reading' Greek Death*.<sup>38</sup> Aside from Morris' scathing review of Sourvinou-Inwood's hypothesis, he briefly covers a number of widely accepted points regarding the archaeological evidence for Greek burial, including family plots, the changing nature of child burial, attitudes towards pollution and the sacredness of the dead. In general, this article does little justice to wider work on the Greek Bronze Age societies, and does not contribute significantly to scholarship on death in the period.

In *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*,<sup>39</sup> Bremmer presents an argument which directly disagrees with Sourvinou-Inwood's hypothesis of conflicting ideologies presented in Homer as symptomatic of social change. He frames this argument around the social construction of laughter. There is significant post-Archaic literary evidence for the inability for visitors – deceased or living – to laugh

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<sup>36</sup> I. Morris 1989: 302-303.

<sup>37</sup> I. Morris 1989: 312.

<sup>38</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995.

<sup>39</sup> Bremmer 1983.

while in the Underworld.<sup>40</sup> This is, Bremmer contends, associated with the personification of *eidola* as constructed memory, from the perspective of surviving friends and relatives. The dead were represented in two distinct ways, as mute and lifeless, as they would have been at the moment of death, and animated and appearing alive, as they would have been throughout their lives. The change in representation, from mute and witless to lifelike, is not a conflation of older and newer death-related belief, but a consequence of the way the living remember the dead. Vermeule, in her seminal work *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*,<sup>41</sup> also considers memory-construction as integral to death, although considers the ways that the dead themselves are thought to utilise memory. For instance, by clearly writing the deceased's name upon their grave marker, the living can help to facilitate the deceased's memory of their own name, in the hope that this will lead to the retention of other cognitive faculties. For, she says, 'with memory working, other functions may also be restored'.<sup>42</sup> These two functions of memory are not incompatible, and there is sufficient ancient evidence for both. What is being highlighted is the emphasis placed on memory and its important role in the construction of death-beliefs in the archaic and classical world.

Relatives of the deceased were required to undertake several stages of ritual in order to ensure their loved one would enter the Underworld. Sourvinou-Inwood<sup>43</sup> and Vermeule<sup>44</sup> both discuss the importance of this, and Garland provides a summary of instances in (fictional) literature that demonstrate the initial ritual stages of preparation for death,<sup>45</sup> including bathing<sup>46</sup>, ensuring the ongoing care of

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<sup>40</sup> Bremmer 1983: 85-89.

<sup>41</sup> Vermeule 1979.

<sup>42</sup> Vermeule 1979: 27.

<sup>43</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 18.

<sup>44</sup> Vermeule 1979: 2.

<sup>45</sup> Garland 1985: 16. He refers directly to characters, rather than to works, and does not provide direct references.

<sup>46</sup> Alkestis, Sokrates, and Oidipous.

children<sup>47</sup>, prayers to Hestia<sup>48</sup> and for safe passage to Hades,<sup>49</sup> and farewell to friends and family.<sup>50</sup> He does remind us that cases from literature present the exceptional, rather than the norm, although it is also worth noting that exceptional cases still tell us something about accepted ritual practices in the 'real world'. Situations where a practice is accepted by the characters, and presented without fanfare, likely indicate a commonly practiced ritual. Garland also presents a brief discussion regarding the 'spiritual' elevation of a person actively dying, and their subsequent ability to deliver prophecy and meaningful final words, which is particularly pronounced in the Homeric poems.<sup>51</sup> In an examination of the precise moment of death in the Homeric poems, Garland shows that the precise moment of death traditionally occurred when the psyche fled the body, either through the mouth or an open wound, but by the classical period death seemed to have become considerably longer. Following this, Garland leaves major eschatological considerations behind, and he begins examination of the ritual aspects of the funeral.

Garland's discussion of the funeral rite is broken into three parts, each representing one stage of the ritual funerary process, which include *prosthesis* (laying out the body), *ekphora* (conveyance to the place of interment), and deposition of the cremated or inhumed remains. He spends considerably more time on the first two stages for which there is more surviving evidence. A portion of each of the subsections within this chapter is dedicated to a discussion of classical era legal reforms regarding the funeral and what can be deduced about the rituals from these reforms. Vermeule also discusses funeral rites with reference to three distinct phases, although these differ slightly from Garland's. Her model begins with the purification of the house and body, then *prosthesis*, with *ekphora* as the final stage.<sup>52</sup> Although these models have slightly different emphases, they both serve

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<sup>47</sup> Alkestis, and Oidipous.

<sup>48</sup> Alkestis and Aias.

<sup>49</sup> Sokrates and Aias.

<sup>50</sup> Alkestis, Oidipous, and Aias.

<sup>51</sup> Garland 1985: 20.

<sup>52</sup> Vermeule 1979: 13.

to demonstrate the considerable amount of time and energy expended on the care of the corporeal remains of the deceased, and this may account for Vermeule's contention that the Greeks had a greater consideration for the deceased's body, rather than their soul. She contends that the body is 'doubled' upon death, with one remaining at the grave and the other being sent into the Underworld. This accounts for the idea that the deceased does not stray from their tomb, and also that the deceased in the Underworld can be physically punished and hurt.<sup>53</sup> The tripartite schema of funerary rites aligns with commonly accepted schemas of other rites-of-passage, predominantly following the schema established by van Gennep.<sup>54</sup> Rites-of-passage, roughly following this tripartite schema, contain a stage of separation, a liminal stage, and a stage of reincorporation. Many rituals of transition, and particularly many myths which aetiologically explain rites-of-passage, include a death-related element (usually the death is the completion of the first stage, and traversing the Underworld is the phase of liminality). This schema can also be applied to the funerary rites. Purification and *prosthesis* constitute the 'separation', where the deceased is farewelled by friends and family. The *ekphora*, funerary procession, and interment are together the liminal phase, and during this time the deceased transitions from the world of the living to the world of the dead. Finally, the deceased integrates (rather than *reintegrating*) into the Underworld, and the process of death is finally completed. Like any other transitory passage the deceased begins with one social status, and ends with widespread acceptance of a different social status.<sup>55</sup>

Garland next considers the polluting influence the dead (whether the physical corpse or the psyche of the deceased) could have over the living.<sup>56</sup> In many cases, the degree of pollution directly corresponds to an individual's closeness to the deceased. Garland conjectures that the corpse is a pollutant during the time

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<sup>53</sup> Vermeule 1979: 7-8.

<sup>54</sup> van Gennep 1960: 11.

<sup>55</sup> For further discussion on this, see Appendix 3.

<sup>56</sup> Garland 1985: 41-42.

the *psyche* travels between the worlds of the living and the dead. This is, as he comments, even though the deceased themselves had a level of 'purity' and were often considered to be a 'sacred object'.<sup>57</sup> Pollution concepts surrounding death were not only sentimental in nature, but also founded in the practical, physical, hygienic considerations that needed to be accounted for when moving around the decomposing corpse; this will be discussed in more detail in chapter three below. Parker deals specifically with death pollution in a chapter of *Miasma*, commenting that it is likely that pollution was considered to be 'just one aspect of the state of mourning'.<sup>58</sup> However, he does note that differing kinds of death create different intensities of pollution. For example, he comments, a person who died in bed, of natural causes, would not create a permanent polluting force upon the bed, whereas the implements of suicide would be permanently polluted and would require disposed outside the city limits.<sup>59</sup>

Sourvinou-Inwood's hypotheses regarding personal grief seem to mirror Garland's assertion regarding the sentimental nature of pollution concepts. She remarks that, even though there is acceptance of personal grief, it is tempered by the concept of death's inevitability. Grief is not a long-lasting, personal trauma that overtakes a person indefinitely, but rather a highly controlled, ritualised act. Grief focuses on personal disadvantage and loss to the surviving relatives, rather than to the deceased.<sup>60</sup> Personal grief can be separated from ritualised lamentation, which is owed to the dead, as a form of praise which served to stress a person's importance and value.<sup>61</sup> Grief and lamentation are connected to the *ekphora* phase of funerary rites, as this is where they are most publically expressed.

Garland goes on to a brief discussion regarding the reunion of dead relatives in the Underworld.<sup>62</sup> Although he presents only a small amount of evidence that

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<sup>57</sup> Garland 1985: 47.

<sup>58</sup> Parker 1983: 35.

<sup>59</sup> Parker 1983: 41-42.

<sup>60</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 24-25.

<sup>61</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 171, 175, 177.

<sup>62</sup> Garland 1985: 66-68.



reinforces the idea that Underworld reunion was possible, it appears as though the concept would have been widely accepted. Vermeule concludes that familial reunion in the Underworld served mainly to comfort the deceased.<sup>63</sup> The newly dead would know that they would be greeted by their previously deceased relatives, who would help them come to terms with their disembodiment and dislocation from living society. Messages could be sent with the newly deceased from still living relatives to those previously deceased.<sup>64</sup> Garland then discusses other activities which the dead may participate in the Underworld, including feasting and dining, sexual intercourse, and game playing, though he comments that 'the principle activities of the Homeric dead appear to be gossip, sententious moralising and self-indulgent regret'.<sup>65</sup> For the most part, grave offerings in the archaic and classical periods were objects that facilitated the comfort and happiness of the dead person. Board games were often deposited in graves during the seventh and sixth centuries, with several examples depicting images of mourning women in their corners.<sup>66</sup> These were made specifically for burial and Vermeule suggests that their presence 'invests the game board with some particular meaning for the chances and skill of life and death',<sup>67</sup> though Garland disagrees with this claim.<sup>68</sup> Grave offerings could also be specific items which belonged to the deceased and which they may want to keep – Vermeule offers the specific example of weaponry.<sup>69</sup> Morris, in *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity*,<sup>70</sup> cautions against viewing grave goods merely as a show of wealth,<sup>71</sup> and that we should view grave objects within their context of a wider ritual practice.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Vermeule 1979: 49.

<sup>64</sup> Vermeule 1979: 49.

<sup>65</sup> Garland 1985: 68.

<sup>66</sup> Whittaker 2004: 279, and fig. 271.

<sup>67</sup> Vermeule 1979: 80.

<sup>68</sup> Garland 1985: 70.

<sup>69</sup> Vermeule 1979: 56.

<sup>70</sup> I. Morris 1992.

<sup>71</sup> I. Morris 1992: 104.

<sup>72</sup> I. Morris 1992: 108.

This is particularly relevant when we consider atypical burials, such as the young, prematurely deceased Athenian girls I will discuss in chapter four. These girls are presented as young brides, and grave goods include objects which were commonly used as wedding offerings and gifts. These girls are considered to be a type of 'special dead', specifically *aoroi* (those who had died prematurely).<sup>73</sup> The *aoroi* do not include those who die while defending their country, regardless of age, and there is no predetermined age at which one is no longer considered to be *aoros*. The most prominent group of *aoroi* were young adults who had died prior to marriage, and there is some evidence that this category may be identified by the presence of a *loutrophoros* – a marriage vase – upon their graves.<sup>74</sup>

Those who had been murdered were considered separately.<sup>75</sup> Responsibility for justice in these cases fell partly upon the relatives and partly upon the *polis*. The killer was under particular threat of vengeance from the murdered spirit,<sup>76</sup> though it was rather more likely that the murdered man would invoke the assistance of a more powerful aide, as in the case of Klytaimestra seeking assistance from the Erinyes in pursuing Orestes.<sup>77</sup> The punishment for murderers who were found guilty was usually death, and there is some disagreement over the burial practices regarding these murderers.<sup>78</sup> Garland puts forth a number of ancient literary and philosophical perspectives, the majority of which include the body being left unburied.<sup>79</sup> Finally, Garland discusses the *ataphoi*,<sup>80</sup> those dead who remain unburied and therefore could not properly enter the Underworld. Only in extreme circumstances was burial denied explicitly, even in warfare. Even a light sprinkling of soil over the corpse could suffice for interment if need be.<sup>81</sup> Antigone's first 'burial' of Polynikes is one

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<sup>73</sup> Garland 1985: 77.

<sup>74</sup> Kokula 1974; Garland 1982: 129-130, 130 n. 120.

<sup>75</sup> Garland 1985: 93.

<sup>76</sup> See, for example, Soph. *El.* 442-446, 482-487; Aisch. *Cho.* 39-40, 278-284.

<sup>77</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* 94-116.

<sup>78</sup> Garland 1985: 95.

<sup>79</sup> Including Pl. *Leg.* 874b and Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.22.

<sup>80</sup> Garland 1985: 101.

<sup>81</sup> Garland 1985: 103.

example of this,<sup>82</sup> although Garland does not discuss the issues resulting from this, nor Antigone's so-called 'second burial' attempt. Proper burial was sometimes undertaken in the absence of a body, if it could not be recovered, further demonstrating the importance of proper funerary rites.

Bremmer also considers a number of these 'special dead' in *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*,<sup>83</sup> in his section on funerary rites and their correlation to the soul. Though Garland's examination is far more rigorous, Bremmer categorises these 'special dead' in a similar way, paying particular attention to the *aoroi* – those who had died untimely deaths – and the *biaiothanatoi* – those who had died violent deaths, a category which Garland does not deal with in specific detail. Bremmer's main conclusions concern the liminal status of the 'special dead' and the idea that they could only inhabit the periphery of the Underworld. This, Bremmer comments, explains why Odysseus first encounters Elpenor, who had been left unburied, along with unwed brides and other youths, the very old, and men who had been slain in battle – all belonging to categories of the 'special dead'.<sup>84</sup>

Garland concludes his main analysis with a chapter regarding the duties of the deceased's relatives following the funerary rites.<sup>85</sup> This including regular visitation at the tomb and undertaking on-going ritual activity. There is evidence for both sacrificial meals and drink offerings made by the living at the tombs of the dead, although liquid offerings appear to be more frequent,<sup>86</sup> there is little evidence regarding who participated in offerings, and whether it was considered ill-luck for the living to share in a portion of a feast for the dead. Decoration of the *stele* and gift-giving are also common practice during visits to the tomb.<sup>87</sup> There is a relatively small amount of evidence for what these offerings contained and the vast majority

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<sup>82</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 245-247. See also Held 1983: 193; J. L. Rose 1952: 219. For a general overview of the issues present here see Margon 1972: 39-49.

<sup>83</sup> Bremmer 1983.

<sup>84</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.38-41; Bremmer 1983: 102-103.

<sup>85</sup> Garland 1985: 104-120.

<sup>86</sup> Vermeule 1979: 57-58.

<sup>87</sup> Garland 1985: 115-118.

of literary evidence describing these kinds of offerings likely involves atypical circumstances, particularly examples from tragedy.<sup>88</sup> It is clear that the *sema* – the grave monument which becomes a symbol of the deceased in the world of the living – was important, and possibly more important than the actual remains of the deceased.<sup>89</sup> Garland’s final discussion attempts to tie dedications at the *sema* with contemporary eschatological beliefs, inferring that the deceased was the subject of something akin to a privately administered cult, tended to by his or her nearest relatives. Although there was a prevailing belief in the Underworld, it was also felt that the deceased had access to the tomb, and that the *stèle* was not simply a monument for remembrance, but rather a place for the deceased to gain material and intellectual nourishment.

While briefly mentioning funerary rites and the ritual offerings that may follow, Johnston focuses on another type of ritual which may be performed at a tomb of the deceased. These were apotropaic rites, which were intended to appease the angry deceased.<sup>90</sup> To use one of Johnston’s own examples, the offerings sent to the grave of Agamemnon by Klytaimnestra constitute this type of ritual practice. Literary examples show that the offerings to the deceased were the same as those used in funerary rites or during rituals honouring the dead.<sup>91</sup> A number of pieces of non-‘fictional’ literary evidence are offered by Johnston. These include references to the dead being given offerings to appease them in texts like those of Plutarch,<sup>92</sup> and epigrammatic evidence such as the *lex sacra* from Selinous which provides commentary on rituals to be performed by an individual who believes they are being targeted by an *elasteros*, an angry spirit or the avenger of

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<sup>88</sup> For example, Orestes dedicating a lock of hair at his father’s tomb (Aisch. *Cho.* 6).

<sup>89</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 120.

<sup>90</sup> Johnston 1999: 46–63.

<sup>91</sup> Johnston 1999: 46.

<sup>92</sup> Plut. *De. Ef. Or.* 418b–c.

an angry spirit.<sup>93</sup> Johnston takes this to mean 'either the soul of the dead person or another supernatural agent sent by the soul'.<sup>94</sup>

Although they were structurally complex, funerary rites were performed without the assistance of a professional. Legal reforms regarding funerary activities demonstrate that the classical Athenians liked to show their grief loudly and publically, to the extent public lamentation was highly restricted.<sup>95</sup> Restrictions, as well as acts like the reuse of earlier, ostentatious, grave monuments, indicate a politically-charged reaction to the privileged position of the (past) aristocracy. In classical Athens, death was an equaliser, and it certainly became more so following legislated cost prohibitions, noise reduction and the ban of professional mourning.<sup>96</sup> This can be demonstrated by the myth of 'Charon's obol' (whether it is representative of actual funerary practice or not, for which there is much debate).<sup>97</sup> Each person can only take a single obol with them to the Underworld, regardless of their wealth and status when alive,<sup>98</sup> and this must be delivered to Charon in order to cross into the Underworld. Although in theory this means that each person enters the Underworld with the same belongings (that is, nothing), the reality of grave goods (which were also subject to restrictions) mean that some would still have been considered 'more wealthy' in the Underworld than others.

A number of scholars, including Richardson,<sup>99</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood,<sup>100</sup> Garland,<sup>101</sup> and Bremmer,<sup>102</sup> discuss various aspects of change-over-time, and I have detailed some of this above. Another shift in death-related ideas occurs around the advent of the 'soul' as a moral object. In the majority of cases in the Homeric epics,

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<sup>93</sup> The *lex sacra* will be discussed in greater detail in Appendix one. For the full text, and introduction to the *lex sacra* see Jameson et al. 1993..

<sup>94</sup> Johnston 1999: 47.

<sup>95</sup> Garland 1989: 3-4.

<sup>96</sup> Garland 1989.

<sup>97</sup> For a discussion on the archaeological evidence for 'Charon's Obol' see Stevens 1991..

<sup>98</sup> Stevens 1991: 217.

<sup>99</sup> Richardson 1985.

<sup>100</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981.

<sup>101</sup> Garland 1985, 1989.

<sup>102</sup> Bremmer 1983, 2002.

death is something merely considered to be the inescapable end of life. Death is sometimes a punishment, and this is normally a particularly premature death.<sup>103</sup> Death-related concepts in the Homeric epics centre on the bleakness, darkness, and unendingness of it; the souls who inhabit the Underworld are not considered with any sort of individuality. Sourvinou-Inwood argues that we can begin to see the shift from one set of beliefs to the other within the Homeric epics, citing situations such as Menelaos, as Zeus' son-in-law, being taken to the Elysian Plains rather than dying. This, she argues, is not a reward for having lived a good or moral life, but by simple virtue of the fact he married Zeus' daughter. In fact, Menelaos is presented specifically as *not* dying.<sup>104</sup> Homer allowed the Greeks to see linkages between death and hunting, war and their animalistic natures, and most of all, allowed them to conceptualise their own mortality. From this, other ideas – such as those of Sourvinou-Inwood's discussed above – about the inevitability of death were born.

In *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*,<sup>105</sup> Bremmer utilises Ernst Arbman's conception of differentiation between the 'soul' of the living and the dead<sup>106</sup> in order to begin his analysis. He outlines six conditions of the Homeric *psyche*, including its unmentioned existence in the living and working body. The *psyche* leaves the body during what Bremmer terms a 'swoon', where the *psyche* temporarily leaves an injured or otherwise incapacitated person but soon returns (though, in Homer, no mention is ever made of return in these cases, which Bremmer theorises is consistent with the condition of the *psyche* being unmentioned in the active body).<sup>107</sup> The *psyche*, also, has no physical or physiological connections, but is an integral component of life and it continues to represent the individual following their death.<sup>108</sup> Bremmer's section on the soul of the dead is the first systematic treatment of concepts surrounding the dead person's soul in classical scholarship, and heavily

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<sup>103</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 20.

<sup>104</sup> Hom. *Od.* 4.561-565; cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 20, 1995: 17.

<sup>105</sup> Bremmer 1983.

<sup>106</sup> Arbman 1926.

<sup>107</sup> Bremmer 1983: 15, 18.

<sup>108</sup> Bremmer 1983: 21.

influences subsequent studies on the *psyche*. The section begins with a brief examination of the vocabulary used to describe various conditions of the soul, particularly *psyche*, *aion*, and *thymos*.<sup>109</sup> The distinction between the *psyche* and the *eidolon* as a representative of the individual post-death. Sourvinou-Inwood makes conclusions about the flight of the soul into the Underworld by focusing on its changed status – the *psyche* of the deceased is not the same as the *psyche* of its living self, and similarly the *thymos* and *aion* undergo change brought about by separation.<sup>110</sup>

The Anthesteria, which has been mentioned above in the context of infant burial, is an Athenian festival celebrated in honour of Dionysos during which the dead were believed to come freely into the world of the living. Bremmer, in his discussion on 'dead' souls, considers whether this reflects actual belief: do the Greeks believe that the ghosts of the dead come into their city during the final day of this festival?<sup>111</sup> His final hypothesis relates the liminality of mourning and the liminal position of 'otherworldly' figures – drawing comparisons to other festivals which invite witches and elves to a contentious reading of an ancient proverb connected to the Athenian Anthesteria – to a social danger being felt throughout the citizen body and, therefore, affecting behaviour.<sup>112</sup> When people feel that their 'normality' is threatened, they attempt to stabilise their irregular condition. The concept of shades returning to the world of the living (signalling the changed and liminal condition) and needed to be ushered back into the Underworld (thereby restoring normality). He also covertly suggests that this change, and the 'visions' of ghosts that accompanies it, may be the result of the overindulgence of wine during the previous two days of the festival.<sup>113</sup> Johnston does not consider whether this practice reflected actual belief. Rather, she considers that the nature of activities

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<sup>109</sup> Bremmer 1983: 14-63. Vermeule also includes the *skia*, or shade, and the *onar* or *opis*, the dream figure, to her analysis. See Vermeule 1979: 8.

<sup>110</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 56-57.

<sup>111</sup> Bremmer 1983: 109.

<sup>112</sup> Bremmer 1983: 17-18.

<sup>113</sup> Bremmer 1983: 120.

undertaken during the festival indicate that the participants did believe the shades were capable of entering the upper world for a predetermined period of time.<sup>114</sup> She asserts that the Argive festival Agriania is similar in form and function to the Athenian Anthesteria, along with the Theban and Boiotian version of this festival the Agrionia (though she provides little evidence for this beyond the similarity of their names).<sup>115</sup> She contends that there is no contradiction for these festivals being simultaneously centred on the new, abundant harvest and on honouring the dead and averting their anger as 'the abundance of good things would make them envious'.<sup>116</sup> This is astutely considered, given the strong connection between the Underworld and agrarian concerns, although Johnston does not draw out this link in any significant way.

In Vermeule's final chapter, she considers the connection between the sea and death. There is a long-recognised correlation between death and the sea, and, as Vermeule comments death is often pictured as a leap into an ocean or lake.<sup>117</sup> The Greeks believed in a myriad of sea-monsters and were loath to swim in the ocean, or even enter into it too deeply (Vermeule suggests ankle deep for most but up to thigh deep for the heroic).<sup>118</sup> Burial at sea constituted non-burial for the purposes of entering the Underworld, unless the deceased was still given a proper funeral, and those lost at sea were less likely to be reunited with their families in the Underworld.<sup>119</sup> The connection between the sea and rites-of-passage also provide an interesting link between sea-related and death-related tropes in myth and cult. A 'leap into the sea' might constitute a 'death and rebirth' in an aetiologically-themed mythic coming-of-age narrative, for example.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Johnston 1999: 65.

<sup>115</sup> Johnston 1999: 66-68.

<sup>116</sup> Johnston 1999: 68.

<sup>117</sup> Vermeule 1979: 179.

<sup>118</sup> Vermeule 1979: 183.

<sup>119</sup> Vermeule 1979: 184-185, 188.

<sup>120</sup> This connection is not made in Vermeule's analysis. For further discussion see appendix 3 and Beaulieu 2008.



Sourvinou-Inwood's *'Reading' Greek Death* deserves some further attention, due mainly to its prolific influence upon the study of death. Her first chapter is focused on the methodology of cultural 'reading', though methodological considerations are littered throughout the book when necessary.<sup>121</sup> Here, Sourvinou-Inwood addresses the major methodological concerns regarding authenticity of reading experience, approaches to disparate and varied subject matter and materials, and problems regarding appropriate levels of reading-into works – what level of intertextuality can we assume has been purposely deposited by the author, and to what extent the audience would have been aware of these 'signposts' in the narrative. The introductory chapter of *'Reading' Greek Death* provides the most comprehensive consideration of the methodological issue concerning interpretation of material and textual evidence about death-related beliefs, addressing both wider contextual problems and subject-specific considerations which need to be undertaken. Indeed, the question raised merely by the title of Sourvinou-Inwood's work hints at these methodological issues, as does her assertion that 'we can better answer the question "what are the parameters determining the Homeric articulations of the afterlife?" than "what exactly did eighth century Greeks believe about the afterlife?"'<sup>122</sup>

The early sections of *'Reading' Greek Death* undertake a systematic treatment of death-related beliefs in Homer, including the origin of Elysion<sup>123</sup> – which she contends is not Minoan in origin as it is often considered<sup>124</sup> – the flight of the *psyche*,<sup>125</sup> and the geographical inconsistencies of the Underworld presented in Homer.<sup>126</sup> Next, she considers the *Nekyia* of the *Odyssey*, demonstrating that its central position can be seen as a way of reminding Odysseus of his own humanity,

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<sup>121</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 1-9.

<sup>122</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 11.

<sup>123</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 17-56.

<sup>124</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 36-37.

<sup>125</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 57-70.

<sup>126</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 70-76.

and normality, 'in this fairyland of non-humanity'.<sup>127</sup> It becomes a reminder of what he will reintegrate into by the end of the poem. Thus, she considers the *Nekyia* to be an organic aspect of the *Odyssey*, though likely in some changed form or position between early versions of the work.<sup>128</sup> During later consideration of book twenty-four, she does conclude that this section is not Homeric in origin, but a 'continuation', though she makes no specific conclusions regarding the composition of the continuation, nor where the 'original' *Odyssey* ends, preferring instead to focus on how the new section may have been integrated into the remainder of the poem.<sup>129</sup> She draws a tentative conclusion that the *Nekyia* of book eleven may, in fact, have originally been placed nearer to the end of the epic, aiding the formation of the 'original' conclusion, and when transposed into its current position it was reworked to fit the new place. Thus, it may be that the audience or author(s) preferred the ending to include a *katabasis*, and added this ending section, or that *katabasis* narratives were sought after and this second *Nekyia*-like scene was therefore included.<sup>130</sup> There is much speculation that the *Odyssey*'s earlier *Nekyia* reflects the real-world Nekyomanteia in Elis,<sup>131</sup> and the second *Nekyia* may have been added in order to speak more to the eschatological concepts prevalent in society at the time, without having the added cultic connotations. Sourvinou-Inwood discusses the semiotics of grave monuments as a way of physicalising this change in the cultic landscape. She examines Homeric representations of grave monuments before undertaking a cross-examination of this literary evidence with the archaeological evidence from the archaic period, before moving on to a number of fifth and fourth century examples (for example, public epitaphs dedicated to Athenian war dead).<sup>132</sup> The examination presented within this section includes commentary on the forms which epitaphic inscriptions and images that are found

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<sup>127</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 71.

<sup>128</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 73-75, 84.

<sup>129</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 92-103.

<sup>130</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 102.

<sup>131</sup> See appendix four for discussion on this, and the associated cultic practices.

<sup>132</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 191.

on *sema*. These outward signifiers on the *sema* are a representation of the deceased's persona (though, not necessarily though a physical representation of the deceased in the case of images and statues) and simultaneous to this form a lasting, outward display of grief at his death.<sup>133</sup> The advent of individualised grave monuments may be seen as an outward demonstration of a shift from a belief in a collective and non-personal fate after death to one in which each of the deceased is treated individually.<sup>134</sup>

To conclude this review, I will give a brief overview of scholarship on the so-called 'Orphic' gold tablets. These begin to appear in the late fifth century, and so represent the emergence of a later belief than the one which has been focused upon thus far. Graf and Johnston's *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife* presents a new edition of the Greek text of the tablets (compiled by Graf), alongside an English translation (undertaken by Johnston).<sup>135</sup> Although grouped geographically, rather than thematically (as in other text editions), Johnston defines two distinct groups of tablets, arranged by purpose. The first are mnemonic tablets, designed to instruct the recently dead on their first steps into the Underworld, the second are proxies, introductory tablets designed to act on the soul's behalf.<sup>136</sup> Graf and Johnston's edition presents thirty-nine tablets, with a note explaining that there are also an 'undisclosed number of gold-tablets from fifteen cist-graves, 4<sup>th</sup> cent. BCE each placed in the mouth of a deceased',<sup>137</sup> which only contain personal names. The majority of longer tablets contain what appear to be instructions, advising the deceased how they may enter the Underworld. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal's *Instructions for the Netherworld: The Orphic Gold Tablets*<sup>138</sup> examine fewer texts than Graf and Johnston, but provide more detailed notes on the text of the

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<sup>133</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 277.

<sup>134</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 299.

<sup>135</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007, 2013.

<sup>136</sup> Graf and Johnston 2013: 94-95.

<sup>137</sup> Graf and Johnston 2013: 46.

<sup>138</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008.

tablets, along with a commentary based upon the subject of each group of tablets. Within these sections, they cover much of what Graf and Johnston cover within the explanatory section of their work.

The most accessible introduction to the tablets is presented by Edmonds in *Myths of the Underworld Journey*.<sup>139</sup> Edmonds introduces some of the methodological problems which studies of the tablets have encountered, most notably a lack of contemporary literary evidence.<sup>140</sup> Although, he does note that there is a likely connection between the gold tablets and *katadesmoi*, which begin to appear around the same time.<sup>141</sup> Edmonds constructs the tablets as being instructions for overcoming a certain difficulty or obstacle upon the journey into the Underworld, and thus presents his analysis within the framework of 'obstacle-solution-result',<sup>142</sup> and all such frameworks have a basis in traditional elements of the Underworld journey narrative. Edmonds makes clear that he does not presuppose a single, certain origin for the beliefs revealed in the gold tablets, but that each traditional component may suggest some form of contextual nuance.<sup>143</sup>

Following the edited text of the tables, Graf offers a chapter on the history of scholarship related to the tablets,<sup>144</sup> from their first discovery and misidentification as oracular scripts. Johnston then presents a chapter on the 'revised' myth of Dionysos, as it relates to the Orphic/Bakchic mystery cult depicted upon the tablets.<sup>145</sup> For example, one tablet refers to 'glorious initiates and *bacchoi*',<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Edmonds 2004.

<sup>140</sup> Edmonds 2004: 31.

<sup>141</sup> Edmonds 2004: 31-32.

<sup>142</sup> Edmonds 2004: 35.

<sup>143</sup> Edmonds 2004: 109.

<sup>144</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007: 50-65.

<sup>145</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007.

<sup>146</sup> Graf and Johnston 2013: 4-5.

another to 'the rituals of Bacchus',<sup>147</sup> and a third to 'Pure and sacred Dionysus'.<sup>148</sup> Johnston argues that the foundation for this changed myth, in which Dionysos becomes the child of Zeus and Persephone rather than Semele, originates from earlier connections between Dionysos and the Underworld.<sup>149</sup> Edmonds, however, questions the assumption of Persephone as the mother of Dionysos in the context of the gold tablets. He does agree that they have a close relationship to one another, but says there is no direct indication of a mother-son relationship.<sup>150</sup>

A number of the tablets geographical features of the Underworld, and these appear on mnemonic tablets from all over the ancient world and dating from between the fifth and the second or first centuries. The majority of these express some concern with obtaining water, and describe the location of various good and bad springs from which to drink.<sup>151</sup> Johnston presents a case that the various options for drinking presented to the dead are directly related to remembering and forgetting.<sup>152</sup> Although a number of various explanations are put forward for this, which include the soul requiring memory of his previous life to 'do better' in his next one, Johnston's final justification for this connection is that by remembering their previous lives, good souls 'will be able to enjoy their rewards fully'.<sup>153</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal further elucidate the connection to memory, mentioning that the personification of memory, Mnemosyne, is mentioned in a number of the tablets and is the mythic maternal grandmother of Orpheus.<sup>154</sup> They categorise her involvement as demonstrative of the 'full circle' of life: though memory, the soul

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<sup>147</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007: 38-39. cf. Graf and Johnston 2013: 38-39. This newer edition does not explicitly mention the 'rituals of Bacchus' as in the earlier, although the textual reconstruction remains unchanged: πέμπε με πρὸς μυστῶ<ν> θιάσους· ἔχω ὄργια [Βάκχου] ('Send me to the feasts of the initiates; I possess the rituals of Bacchus' and 'Send me to the *thiasoi* of the initiates; I possess the tokens of [ ]'; 2007 and 2013 editions respectively).

<sup>148</sup> Graf and Johnston 2013: 40-41.

<sup>149</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007: 75-77.

<sup>150</sup> Edmonds 2004: 58-59.

<sup>151</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 30.

<sup>152</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007: 98-100.

<sup>153</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007: 120, 2013: 120.

<sup>154</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 15.

comes to know his own identity and thereby begins to remember more about his life. This belief, as discussed above, has its roots in earlier eschatological belief, although Edmonds makes the only remark regarding the use of grave markers as a memory-inductor.<sup>155</sup> Of this he says that it is obvious that the Orphic initiates do not hope for everlasting memory within the world of the living, because the tablets are buried with them, rather than displayed in any way.<sup>156</sup> In this context, memory is utilised as a way for the soul to ensure that he is paying dues and receiving rewards as appropriate to his conduct in life, and thus, memory becomes salvation.<sup>157</sup>

The deceased's ability to retain memory of life while in the Underworld presents a marked shift from the initial ideas expressed by 'older' beliefs presented in Homer, namely that the shades of the dead were witless and without knowledge.<sup>158</sup> Edmonds makes a connection between quenching thirst and memory to the story of Er in Plato's *Republic*, in which those souls who refrained from over-drinking did not suffer their memories being erased.<sup>159</sup> Edmonds views the tablets as being predominantly about identity, which relies heavily on memory to be established. The various components of the tablets correspond to various statements of identity which culminate in the deceased being allowed entry into the Underworld. Any difference within the identity statements found within the corpus of the tablets corresponds to differences in eschatological hopes of the participants.

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A number of tablets also include what appear to be passwords. Johnston considers this password would have been spoken to Persephone herself.<sup>161</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal do not hypothesise about the recipient, and Edmonds

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<sup>155</sup> Edmonds 2004: 34.

<sup>156</sup> Edmonds 2004: 53.

<sup>157</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 17; Edmonds 2004: 53.

<sup>158</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 33.

<sup>159</sup> Edmonds 2004: 51.

<sup>160</sup> Edmonds 2004: 80-82.

<sup>161</sup> Graf and Johnston 2013: 130.

mentions only that it could be Persephone.<sup>162</sup> The password would function as a way of being recognised and, thus, admitted into the inner sanctuary of the Underworld.<sup>163</sup> The proxy tablets normally only include the name of the deceased, and sometimes also a dedication to a god (normally Persephone) or a declaration of initiation – for example, Φιλων μύστας ‘Philon, the initiate’.<sup>164</sup> Johnston suggests that the presence of these tablets indicate that, for some groups of people, initiation would be sufficient to guarantee a good afterlife.<sup>165</sup>

Graf suggests that Orphism was a sub-category of a more widely practiced Bakchic cult which may have, over time, widened to include all Bakchic cults.<sup>166</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal situate the tablets as being particularly Orphic, rather than belonging to a Bakchic or other mystery cult, due to their heavy eschatological nature, which is not necessarily a feature of other Mystery cults.<sup>167</sup> This can be demonstrated particularly in the use of passwords within the tablets to indicate that the deceased is a member of this particular group and, thus, deserve entry into a ‘better’ afterlife.<sup>168</sup> Edmonds views Orphism as an essentially ‘countercultural’ religion, particularly in the context of how ‘mainstream’ Greek religion (if such a thing exists) is organised around the *polis*.<sup>169</sup> Thus, as various societies had different ‘protests’ against this mainstream religion, the beliefs expressed by the gold tablets make a number of different, but comparable, comments about this ‘countercultural’ religious movement. As such, we should not view the Orphic gold tablets as commenting on congruent systems which exist alongside ‘mainstream’ religion, but rather as a tool for understanding a number of potentially disparate responses to religious ideologies.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Edmonds 2004: 58-59.

<sup>163</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 152-155.

<sup>164</sup> Edmonds F5 496c. Edmonds’ *F* group is made up of such tablets, and see Edmonds 2011: table 2.7.

<sup>165</sup> Graf and Johnston 2013: 135.

<sup>166</sup> Graf and Johnston 2013: 142-143.

<sup>167</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 185.

<sup>168</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 186-187.

<sup>169</sup> Edmonds 2004: 41.

<sup>170</sup> Edmonds 2004: 41, 45-46.

There are a two general conclusions that are reached by several scholars and which may provide a starting point for this thesis. Firstly, most scholars who discuss shifting attitudes being presented in the Homeric epics demonstrate that a variety of beliefs and practices are shown within these poems, and that this can be read as the creation of a multi-layered system in which older beliefs and attitudes co-exist comfortably with newer beliefs. Johnston seems the only one to disagree with this premise, though her argument against it is slightly confused – she states that these poems do not indicate any level of Underworld belief simply because the things demonstrated in the epics, such as the *psyche* of the deceased returning to the mortal world, do not actually happen when the body dies.<sup>171</sup> However, she seems to miss the vital point that it does not matter what actually occurs after death, but that the important aspect is what contemporary people believed occurred. She also acknowledges that the emergence of *katadesmoi*, in the late sixth and early fifth centuries, indicate that a belief-shift is occurring on some level, in this case directly related to attitudes concerning the deceased shade. Secondly, that death is an elongated process, both for the deceased and for the living family members. It is not something that occurs instantly but through various, and appropriately timed and executed, rituals which must be carried out by the surviving relatives of the deceased. Vermeule also stresses the continuity of death related iconography, which exhibits ‘only slight differences in style, and none in concept’.<sup>172</sup> She gives the example of representations of mourning women on Mycenaean and sixth-century bowls on which the women make the same gestures of mourning and undertake the same ritual practices. Death should be defined by its opposition to life. In this way, the gods are characterised as being *ἄθάνατοι*, ‘deathless’ rather than immortal, and possibly bloodless. Vermeule describes the Greeks as having a negative attitude towards immortality, and the gods are never categorised as having

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<sup>171</sup> Johnston 1999: 16.

<sup>172</sup> Vermeule 1979: 63.



a psyche,<sup>173</sup> which is directly connected to life though, as discussed above, it is only mentioned in relation to dying.

Scholarship is generally focused on the experience of the *psyche* following death, and on the attitudes of the living toward the dead. This includes the determinable familiarity with death shown in the epic poems, which gradually become a pronounced discomfort surrounding death and can be traced by material changes in death-ritual, most notably the removal of graves from inside the city walls. Death-related divinities are often mentioned but rarely in great detail, and usually with little exploration of their wider context and relationship to death and death-related practices. They are very rarely discussed in the context of non-death related practices, although they often play a role in mythic narratives (either general or specific) of other ritual practices, most notably rites of passage. Divinities who have a strong connection to death and the Underworld, such as Persephone, Hades and Hermes, are often considered specifically in the context of the journey of the *psyche* following death. They are rarely discussed in a wider context, with the exception of Persephone's role in the Eleusinian Mysteries.

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<sup>173</sup> Vermeule 1979: 121-122.

# 1: Methodological Considerations

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This chapter will discuss some of the methodological approaches that have been used in the study of Greek religious practices. This includes an examination of what 'Greek religion' is, and how we should conduct a study of Greek religion. It will discuss ways in which we can map local beliefs and religious structures without falling into the trap of reducing the local subtleties and variations to unexplained or unimportant points in a schema of general 'beliefs' or 'belief structures'. It is the local variation which is not only the most important but is of the most interest, particularly to this study. It will also look at the conceptualisation of 'panhellenic' religion in the Greek world; this is important because many of the practices examined in this study focus on local variant practices, rather than common cultic activity that encompassed the Greek world. This is followed by a discussion on the relationship between myth and ritual, and finally, a brief explanatory note on personified divine figures.

## Greek Religion

Gould has written:

To talk meaningfully about the religion of another culture is not easy, and requires of us some degree of tact and imagination. We need to be aware of the pitfalls. To begin with, it will seem all too clear that what we are dealing with is a human invention, a 'fiction' constructed by men for their own purposes – an interpretation which we can never quite give to the religion of our own culture, even if we have rejected it. To make that assumption will not help us to understand though it may boost our sense of superiority. And secondly, there is the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of avoiding thinking about someone else's religion as a kind of exercise in 'decoding', in translating myth and ritual into a 'natural' language (our own, of course) in which these things can be made to yield their true sense, which may be hidden from those who carry out the rituals and who recount the myths.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gould 1985: 1.

It has long been recognised that to speak of Greek religion as a single 'creed' or even as a consistent set of beliefs is erroneous. Rather, it has become customary to approach religion with more caution and to attempt to understand what makes various religious experiences throughout the Greek world unique from one another. Factors which contribute to the uniqueness of experience revolve mainly around issues of place and space. That is, ritual variation from sanctuary to sanctuary and *polis* to *polis*, but also of person: the difference in experience between a wealthy citizen male, a slave, a farmer, a youth, a woman, a priest and so forth.<sup>2</sup> Bremmer opened his 1994 study *Greek Religion* by posing the question: 'Was there ever such a thing as Greek Religion?',<sup>3</sup> although he does not commit to providing a concrete answer. Kearns goes some way to answering when she comments that 'though we may speak of a Greek religious system, it is a system which is never consciously defined as such (at least until the end of pagan antiquity), and remained extraordinarily fluid and inclusive'.<sup>4</sup> The influence of Homer and Hesiod on the increasing systemisation of religious practices throughout the Greek world<sup>5</sup> was later enhanced by the generalisations of travelling scholars, such as Herodotos,<sup>6</sup> who himself alludes to the 'connectedness' of Greeks. Here the historian records, or reinterprets, the Athenians' indignant response to the Spartan suggestion that they would desert the Greek collective and make an alliance with the Persians, following Alexander I of Macedon's advice:

αὐτίς δὲ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἔὼν ὁμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον καὶ θεῶν  
ἰδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα, τῶν προδότας  
γενέσθαι Ἀθηναίους οὐκ ἂν εὖ ἔχοι.

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<sup>2</sup> For a fuller discussion see Parker 2011: 224-264.

<sup>3</sup> Bremmer 1994: 1.

<sup>4</sup> Kearns 2010: 2.

<sup>5</sup> Kindt 2012: 13.

<sup>6</sup> Bowden 2007: 77.

and next the kinship of all Greeks with common blood and speech, and shared sanctuaries and sacrifices, and similar customs to all of which it would not become the Athenians to be false.<sup>7</sup>

Although Herodotos mentions ὅμαιμόν (common blood), ὁμόγλωσσον (common language), θεῶν ἰδρύματ' τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι (shared sanctuaries and sacrifices) and ἥθεά τε ὁμότροπα (similar customs), this is done in the context of military alliance, not as a vague espousal of what it meant to be Greek.<sup>8</sup> Hall has argued that the rarity of statements of shared Greekness in extant literature, coupled with the 'Athenians' adding this evocation onto their argument as an apparent afterthought, shows that 'ultimately, their primary concern is with avenging their sacked temples, suggesting that the Athenian community of cult outranked any broader Hellenic affiliation'.<sup>9</sup> He also suggests that it is not Herodotos' style to point out so explicitly something that would have been an otherwise obvious consideration to his audience and is, therefore, attempting to broaden the definition of 'Greekness' himself.<sup>10</sup>

The Greeks had no word that encompassed the idea of 'religion' or a 'religious system'. Earlier studies of Greek religion do not contemplate whether there was a religious structure in place in the ancient Greek world, and if they do hint towards the erroneous conception of 'Greek religion' it was not as explicit as Bremmer's later query. Burkert's seminal work assumes that there was a generally accepted system of ritual practice across Greek communities that he does not explain or expand upon, referring simply to 'Greek Religion'.<sup>11</sup> Burkert does

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<sup>7</sup> Hdt. 8.144.2 cf. Kindt 2012: 13-14; Hall 2001: 44-45.

<sup>8</sup> It is also worth noting that the term 'panhellenic' was 'imposed on the Greek world by its Roman masters in order to assert the unity of the province through a focus on its common ancestry and historical kinship, rather than a term often used by the Greeks themselves to describe their unity'. (Scott 2010: 261.)

<sup>9</sup> Hall 2001: 90.

<sup>10</sup> Hall 2001: 189-191.

<sup>11</sup> A footnote on the term 'Greek religion' in the introduction points only to a long list of secondary sources which deal with Greek religion at large. Burkert 1985: 343 n. 341.

acknowledge the potential chaos inherent in any study of the Greek gods; he comments:

The distinctive personality of a god is constituted and mediated by at least four different factors: the established local cult with its ritual programme and unique atmosphere, the divine name, the myths told about the named being, and the iconography, especially the cult image. All the same, this complex is easily dissolved, and this makes it quite impossible to write the history of any single god.<sup>12</sup>

He follows this, however, with a rather brief and generalising exposition of individual gods that glosses over the nuances of local cultic practices, perhaps in an effort to explain local variations as all being related to a central core identity of each divinity. It is easy to see, from Burkert and elsewhere, that it is not necessarily the acknowledgement of the complex and chaotic nature of the study of 'Greek religion' where one may fall down, rather it is the application of a frame of understanding that ensures we do not resort to the easy habit of generalisation. How, then, should we map local beliefs and religious structures without falling into the trap of reducing the local subtleties and variations to unexplained or unimportant points in the schema of general 'beliefs' or 'belief structures'? It is, in fact, the local variation which is not only the most important but also the most interesting to study.

This is not to say that there are no common elements in Greek cultic practice. There are large similarities in the general structure of cultic practice in the archaic and classical periods, although there are many exceptions and small local variations, or at least this is the picture that our admittedly limited evidence suggests. Mythology is one aspect of religious life that does indeed appear ubiquitously throughout the Greek-speaking world, though mythology often has little direct influence on ritual. Myths may be retold through cult song and practice, where they may develop into an unchanging and stabilised version in each particular cultic setting. However, as Parker comments, 'the idea of an Attic priest or priestess

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<sup>12</sup> Burkert 1985: 19.

recounting myths to the faithful is just as unfamiliar as the idea of their using books in the conduct of ritual'.<sup>13</sup> What this implies is that different myths are told about the same gods at different cultic centres – the story of Apollo's birth being recounted on Delos and the establishment of the oracular shrine on Delphi, for example – and this is exactly what Pausanias implies occurs in his own time. However, this is not an argument for suggesting that there is a shared, panhellenic system in which these myths operate and are used. There is, however, an interconnectedness of myth and ritual, and this shall be discussed in more detail below, though it is important to highlight a few issues of mythology here.

A common assumption is that mythology and ritual together make up a religious wholeness that cannot be complete if one of these elements is removed. That is, as Christensen says, 'traditionally, religion is characterised as consisting of myths and rituals... it is still widely assumed that in some way the two complement each other: myth represents "the things said" and ritual represents "the things done"'.<sup>14</sup> This is not accurate or inaccurate, because much of what constitutes religious practice is internal to the individual, the 'things said' and 'things done' are externalised motions that in themselves have little or no meaning, without the meaning ascribed to them in the mind of the individual. What we can say, however, is that although rituals themselves may be meaningless or mindless actions, the act of participating in rituals is not meaningless. Conversely, ritual participation is very meaningful and is evidence for the forging of relationships between the mortal practitioners and the divine.<sup>15</sup> The idea of ascribing 'belief' to the Greeks seems at odds with current scholarship<sup>16</sup> and there has been a tendency to study either myth

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<sup>13</sup> Parker 2011: 21.

<sup>14</sup> Christensen 2009: 13-14.

<sup>15</sup> Christensen 2009: 14.

<sup>16</sup> This will be discussed below, but see also Kindt 2012: 30-32, 42-42; Kearns 2010: 88-89; Versnel 2011: 539-559. On Versnel's definition of belief see 548-549; on the belief in divinity of human rulers, but dealing with many aspect of what belief is and means see 465-471, 476-477. On this Mair says 'The irrelevance of belief in understanding religion has been so well attested that it has become something of an anthropological truism'. Mair 2012: 451. In the 'big and general' books that deal with 'Greek Religion' we often find the idea of belief left out completely, authors will discuss ritual and sacrificial practice, but the concept of belief is unaddressed; for example, Burkert 1985; Bremmer

or cultic activity, or the interplay between the two, without an examination of how these fit into the actual beliefs of the ancients themselves. What follows is the idea, as Parker comments, that 'myths imply certain conceptions of the gods' capacities and attitudes, what we might be tempted to term "beliefs" about the gods, were "belief" not a term that has often been declared inapplicable to ritual-centred religions'.<sup>17</sup> The concept of belief in Greek religion shall be discussed in the next section.

Greek religious life can be viewed as being made up of three 'poles' – myth, ritual, and experience. Each pole forms an important aspect not only of religious but also of civic and personal life, due to the interconnected nature of these aspects in the everyday lives of ancient peoples. 'Ritual and myth', as Gould comments, 'are both modes of religious response to experience in a world in which "chaos", the threat posed by events which seem to be unintelligible or which outrage moral feeling, is always close'.<sup>18</sup> The performance of the ritual, the understanding – whether deep or superficial – of the myth, inform the experience of life and vice versa. We shall see this more clearly in the section below dealing with myth and ritual.

### Belief in Greek Religion?

In the attempt to circumvent the issue of belief and, as Christensen says, 'under the influence of speech-act theory ("words are deeds"), the study of religion has become more the study of "religion as practice" or "religion in action" than "religion as belief"'.<sup>19</sup> It might be pertinent to view this kind of study as one of 'cult' not 'religion',

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1994; Mikalson 2010. That is not to say that all such books have left out discussions on belief – although he does not discuss cognitive approaches to belief, Parker titles one of the chapters in *On Greek Religion* as 'Why Believe Without Revelation'. (Parker 2011.), and Price addresses belief as a concept in *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Price 1999. 3), dismissing it summarily by saying: 'practice, not belief is the key, and to start from questions of faith or personal piety is to impose alien values on ancient Greece'.

<sup>17</sup> Parker 2011: 2.

<sup>18</sup> Gould 1985: 9.

<sup>19</sup> Christensen 2009: 14.

particularly following Christiansen's definition of cult as 'less than "religion", but as more than "ritual"'.<sup>20</sup> Durkheim, however, defines cult as always including references to the gods or other supernatural beings, and he also requires ritual to have regularly timed occurrences within the year. This means that weddings and funerals, occasions traditionally thought of as being religious in nature, would not be considered cultic. Even though funerals and weddings could be considered to take place at regularly scheduled times – that is a certain amount of time after a person has died, or a certain amount of time after a betrothal has been proclaimed – they are not regularly positioned in relation to the sacred year. So, in regards to the Greeks, who are focused on the sacred calendar – indicating a concern with regular, defined, scheduled cultic practices – Durkheim's is a perfectly satisfactory and functioning definition. It also serves to demonstrate how non-cultic ritual and religious practices can be made cultic through ordinance. For example, the changes to funerary law that ordain a single annual day of ancestor worship formalise this practice into cultic activity,<sup>21</sup> where previously it had been a more sporadic, individualised activity that was not related to the divine in any way. One of the major issues we face, in the study of Greek religious practices, is that, as Christensen comments, 'speaking about "cult" rather than "religion" is also a way of signalling a resistance to "belief" being of importance in ancient religion'.<sup>22</sup> Belief is an important aspect of religion, and it is something that we must consider even if we do not address it directly.<sup>23</sup> In this study, I do not use the term 'cult' to denote practice without consideration of belief; rather I use the term to denote *active* religious practice. That is, religious practice that is performed or acted out in some way, whether through actions, processions, singing, chanting, inscribing, dedicating, sacrificing or any other purposeful and active practice, is considered herein to be cultic in nature.

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<sup>20</sup> Christensen 2009: 18.

<sup>21</sup> Durkheim 1995: 59-60.

<sup>22</sup> Christensen 2009: 21.

<sup>23</sup> And, as we saw above, it is often not addressed at all.



Versnel's 2011 *Coping with the Gods* includes an appendix titled 'Did the Greek Believe in their Gods?' In the opening of this appendix, Versnel deals with much of the ancient evidence on belief in Greek 'religion'. He categorises two 'schools' of non-belief advocates: what he calls the "'new creed" of "non-believers"',<sup>24</sup> starting with Price, 'one of the earliest and most ardent devotees of the new creed',<sup>25</sup> who states:

Indeed the centrality of 'religious belief' in our culture has sometimes led to the feeling that belief is a distinct and natural capacity which is shared by all human beings. This, of course, is nonsense. 'Belief' as a religious term is profoundly Christian in its implications; it was forged out of the experience which the Apostles and Saint Paul had of the Risen Lord. The emphasis which 'belief' gives to spiritual commitment has no necessary place in the analysis of other cultures. That is, the question about the 'real beliefs' of the Greeks is again implicitly Christianizing.<sup>26</sup>

Versnel goes on to comment that it is the 'new creed' movement, and Price's own work, that has brought about the idea that ritual was considered with such high importance in the study of Greek 'religion' that such studies essentially viewed ritual as religion.

The second 'school' of non-belief advocates, highlighted well in the passage quoted above, was the notion that any kind of idea that could have Christian overtones should be purged from the study of ancient religions. This latter point is not unfounded, and does represent something that should be taken into consideration by students and scholars of Greek and Roman – indeed, any non-Judaeo-Christian – culture. Garland opens his Greek religion 'text book' with a list of things which Greek religion was not, and they include a number of items that are instantly recognisable as being tenets of Christianity.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Versnel 2011: 540. Versnel has taken the phrase 'new creed' from Yunis 1996.

<sup>25</sup> Versnel 2011: 541.

<sup>26</sup> Price 1984: 10-11.

<sup>27</sup> Garland 1994: ix.

But, as we have seen above, ritual does not necessarily need to take the whole place of religion. Indeed, there is some ritual activity that may not be classified as being religious in nature at all. Burials, for example, are not focused on divinities but the on the deceased, therefore if we are going to take the concept of religious-based ritual activity through to a logical conclusion we must say that burial rites are not religious. I am more willing to cautiously place burial in the 'religious' category, due to the number of similarities that we can find between burial rites and other religious services.<sup>28</sup> As there is a clear 'theology' of the dead in ancient Greece, as we shall see throughout this thesis, I think it is reasonable to consider funerary rituals as being religious in a general sense of the word.<sup>29</sup>

### Thinly-Coherent Communities

Religion was an integral component of civic life. That is, as Kindt comments, 'religion was structured alongside the socio-political structures of the *polis*'.<sup>30</sup> Religious-based communities in the Greek world could exist in a number of overlapping ways and individuals would, necessarily, belong to multiple different religious communities. An example of this can be found in the deme decree from around 420 from Plotheia, one of Athens' smallest demes, which deals with the financing of individuals participating in various religious bodies.<sup>31</sup>

These communities broadly consist of public and private religious bodies. Most generally the public religious community is bounded by the *polis*, although smaller public communities exist at phratry and deme level.<sup>32</sup> A larger community

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<sup>28</sup> See appendix one.

<sup>29</sup> Perhaps in Versnel's sense of 'low-intensity' belief: 'the argument... "believing" *originally* meant "having faith" or even "to pledge allegiance to" (and that out word "belief" still betrays traces of those connotations) is *in this respect* irrelevant. If one still fears a jamming of interfering connotations once can use "to acknowledge (as true)" but it denotes exactly the same. Scholarly discourse is always etic and should therefore be conducted in etic terms. This means that the person who engages in this type of research must clarify that (s)he will use the term "believe" in a broad "low intensity" meaning and not in its Christian "high intensity" application with all its well-known implications'. Versnel 2011: 548.

<sup>30</sup> Kindt 2012: 16.

<sup>31</sup> SEG 36 25.

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of the various sub-divisions of the *polis*, see Sourvinou-Inwood 2000b: particularly 28-31.

was formed through participation at panhellenic sanctuaries, in festivals such as the Olympic or Pythian Games and membership of other types of federation, such as *Amphiktyonies* which were confederated states with shared sanctuaries. These public communities were, for the most part, formed through identification with the *polis* rather than anything else. That is to say, individuals would not normally participate in cultic activity at a panhellenic level without reference to belonging to a certain *polis* and *polis*-membership played a large role in the ability to participate at panhellenic sanctuaries.<sup>33</sup> Non-*polis* centred religious activity could operate at the very smallest level, for instance an individual inscribing a *katadesmos* and burying it in a grave, or on a very large scale, such as initiation into a mystery cult.

This is not to say that the practices of different religious groups operated in different spheres of religion. Not only would there have been interaction between the two in strictly theological terms,<sup>34</sup> but there would be a necessary intersection at an individual level. An individual would undertake religious practices within the confines of multiple different communities, without considering that there may be any incompatibility between the ideas presented in each of those spheres. The man who buries a *katadesmos* to bind his enemy also marches in the Panathenaic procession to celebrate Athena Polias, undertakes initiation into the Mysteries at Eleusis, and goes as a *theoros* to the Delphic Oracle. As a matter of course, the religious life of the individual involves participation in multiple overlapping communities, small and large, public and private.

Each of these communities operates with the same kind of framework and uses similar semiotic vocabulary which enables members of these communities to speak with one another and, more importantly, with the divinities concerned. This language is formed by a complex structure of signs which facilitate communication between participants, and also enable others to properly decode and interpret the

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<sup>33</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 2000b: 15-16.

<sup>34</sup> Kindt 2012: 23-24.

message being put across.<sup>35</sup> Communities which have a semiotic logic that is shared must in some way be coherent with one another. However, we do not have to overestimate this coherence. Signs and symbols may have subtle differences in meaning without being incoherent through the wider culture; they may have an 'overall' meaning that has differences within smaller cultural components; a community within a community. However, as Sewell points out:

This conception actually implies quite minimal cultural coherence – one might call it a thin-coherence. The fact that members of a semiotic community recognise a given set of symbolic oppositions does not determine what sort of statements or actions they will construct on the basis of their semiotic competence. Nor does it mean that they form a community in any fuller sense. They need not agree in their moral or emotional evaluations of given symbols. The semiotic field they share may be recognised and used by groups and individuals locked in fierce enmity rather than bound by solidarity, or by people who feel relative indifference toward each other. The posited existence of cultural coherence says nothing about whether semiotic fields are big or small, shallow or deep, encompassing or specialised. It simply requires that if meaning is to exist at all, there must be systematic relations among signs and a group of people.<sup>36</sup>

Sewell's model of 'thin-coherence' was originally applied to ancient Greek culture by Ober, in the postscript to a volume titled *The Cultures Within Greek Culture*,<sup>37</sup> and it was later published in Ober's own collection of essays.<sup>38</sup> In this essay, Ober stressed that we should view Greek culture as a network of overlapping micro-communities, even though sometimes these communities might contradict one another.<sup>39</sup> Kindt has suggested that it may also be an appropriate, and highly fruitful, way to view the make-up of religious communities in Greece as well.<sup>40</sup> That

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<sup>35</sup> Gould 1985: 4.

<sup>36</sup> Sewell 1999: 50-51.

<sup>37</sup> Dougherty and Kurke 2003: 237-255.

<sup>38</sup> Ober 2005: 69-91.

<sup>39</sup> Kindt 2012: 22.

<sup>40</sup> Kindt 2012: 22.

non-congruent communities might live harmoniously with one another, and that an individual might belong to multiple communities with no particular issue, is reflected in the makeup of Greek cultic life. The gods themselves appear in contradictory guises with no apparent cognitive inconsistency. For example, Persephone can easily be thought of as a virginal maiden or as wife of Hades with no contradiction because these two ideas of the goddess occur in different micro-communities. Thus, even though the semiotic language that indicates 'Persephone' occurs in each micro-community – indicating a level of coherence – there are subtle differences that create incongruent characteristics unique to each cultic or mythic setting. These non-congruent ideas about single divinities can co-exist in society without raising alarm because they are ideas that individuals do not directly consider as incongruous: they belong in different spheres and are called upon in different cultic settings. This is more obvious when we recognise that it is the human agent, rather than any real or imagined divine being, who is responsible for the incongruity. Thus, as Versnel points out, 'it is not the gods who decide where they are from or where they arrive. It is the mortal manipulator, who may even claim the authority to decide who is god and who is not'.<sup>41</sup>

Although Sourvinou-Inwood's model of *polis* religion<sup>42</sup> is a useful one to begin the exploration into the formation of Greek cultic practice, it cannot render the whole picture satisfactorily. The role of the individual is rather underplayed in traditional models of religious practice in the ancient world, but the individual is the key component both in establishing ideas about the gods and ensuring their longevity. Religious concepts, indeed any cultural concepts, are not created in isolation from one another, and are not sent out into the world fully formed.<sup>43</sup> Instead, these concepts are subtly modified by each person who takes them up

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<sup>41</sup> Versnel 2011: 94.

<sup>42</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a, 2000b.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Boyer 2002: 37. He comments that 'all scenarios that describe people sitting around and inventing religion are dubious. Even the ones that see religion as slowly coming out of confused thoughts have this problem'.

before they are passed on or discarded. Alongside this we must remember that religious ideas held by individuals within a community do not need to be exactly the same, and mostly likely are not. These ideas are similar but not identical, and their similarities may be shared among various overlapping, or even completely unconnected, groups.<sup>44</sup> What occurs when the idiosyncrasies of religious practice are downplayed in favour of a more congruent system of religion is that certain ideas and practices become marginalised in the study of the religious culture of the city. That is, as Eidinow says, 'while *polis* religion offers a useful schema for understanding some aspects of ancient Greek religious activity, it cannot provide a comprehensive account of ritual practice across and within ancient Greek communities'.<sup>45</sup> Although the role of the individual is acknowledged as the 'basic cult unit'<sup>46</sup> the only possible framework for the individual to work within is that of the *polis*. As we have seen, however, the individual does not just make up the components of a distinct unit, rather the individual *is* a distinct unit – each with his or her own ideas, experiences and thoughts about religious practices – and together they make up various sized communities that overlap and communicate with one another.

### Greek Gods and Greek Mythology

The gods of Homer are easy enough to imagine; they populate the narrative landscape, they undertake direct and indirect actions in order to influence and manipulate the lives of mortals, they struggle and fight with one another and appear on the battlefield in the image of men – vastly superior, stronger, quicker, and

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<sup>44</sup> Boyer's explication makes this concept very clear: '...knowing that culture is a similarity between people is helpful because it forces you to remember that two objects are similar only *from a certain point of view*. My blue eyes may make me similar to some people, but then my short-sightedness makes me similar to others'. (2002: 41).

<sup>45</sup> Eidinow 2011b: 11.

<sup>46</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a: 47. Here, the example is of individual sacrifice being treated in sacred laws as being akin to *polis* or group sacrifices; categorisation of individuals in a cultic setting by age, gender or profession; individual participating in certain *polis*-centred festivals; and the incurrence of religious restrictions on the individual for various reasons.

smarter than men but in the image of men, and women, nonetheless.<sup>47</sup> They appear in Hesiod's work and in later tragedies in a similar fashion. In many ways these are the same gods who visually populate cult sites throughout the Greek-speaking world. Pediments, friezes, and statues, as well as votives and other small personal offerings, all show the gods in this highly idealised, but very human, form.<sup>48</sup> They also, at least superficially, appear to be somewhat consistent, having consistent attributes and personalities, and with the same set of iconographic indicators in visual culture. From cult to cult, images of the gods display the same semiotic vocabulary for their worshipers. Broadly speaking, each god is depicted in roughly the same form throughout disparate places and media. By the inclusion of specific iconographic attributes, epithets, the description of recognised traits or simply by the use of a common cult name, worshipers would come to recognise their local god as an instantiation of a major 'panhellenised' god, or more probably as their god as *the* version of that particular god who is worshiped elsewhere in different ways. There are some circumstances that naturally deviate from this. For instance, a god may appear in different representations as both aged and youthful, sometimes even within the same sanctuary. In the sanctuary at Kato Syme on Krete, for example, Hermes appears on terracotta *pinakes* as both a youth and an adult.<sup>49</sup> His double guise at this temple is significant in the context of his cultic role as a leader across liminal boundaries – that is, his ability to guide worshipers through metaphysical liminal crossings, which are, in Kato Syme as elsewhere, explicit age barriers. There are also specific cases in which a particular representation of a god deviates significantly from the 'normal' anthropomorphised form: Zeus Meilichios, for example, usually appears as a snake and embodies very few, or none, of the

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<sup>47</sup> And, as Henrichs point; 'ironically the human form which the Greeks shared with their gods often served as a reminder of the distance that separated mortals and immortals. To the extent that the Greek gods seem to look like mortals, they are indistinguishable from them, but numerous myths tell of occasions when this external resemblance turned out to be deceptive'. Henrichs 2010: 32-33.

<sup>48</sup> Dowden (2007: 41) refers to them as being 'exceptionally anthropomorphic,' and highlights this as an uncommon element of Greek religion.

<sup>49</sup> N. Marinatos 2003.

attributes normally associated with Zeus(es) under other epithets. Regardless of these few inconsistencies, it may be easy to conclude that these mostly consistent, 'panhellenic', representations of the gods colour local interpretations of the involved divinities and, thus, influence cult practice.

However, even as different local areas are influenced by new or different versions or retellings of myths<sup>50</sup> and iconographical representations of the individual gods it cannot be said that there is, in fact, a single 'panhellenic' identity of each god, or even of the twelve 'major' Olympian gods.<sup>51</sup> The connection between 'mythic' gods (those found in literature, visual culture and, presumably, oral culture) and 'cultic' gods (with whom local people maintain personal relationships and who are greater in number and variation than those commonly found in myth) would not necessarily be the first connection which came into the minds of the ancient Greeks.<sup>52</sup> When the Greeks approached the cultic gods with whom they shared intimate relationships, they directed their petition not to the abstract gods depicted in myth or on the stage, but to 'specific gods of specific places'.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, however, the Greeks<sup>54</sup> would no doubt have been influenced by overt and popularised representations of the gods, particularly where these had been homogenised; as Parker comments, 'it is scarcely plausible to dismiss this

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<sup>50</sup> Myth itself, though, is problematic. What is a myth? Where do myths originate? Is there a 'true' or 'original' version of each myth? As a deliberately oversimplified definition, I take myth to mean a traditional story that may, or may not, have some aetiological religious function within society. When referring to myths, I mean, generally, 'mythic version' or 'local variant of corresponding mythic story'. For further discussions of myth, what myth is and how mythologies are used see Brillante 1990; Calame 2009: particularly 1-66; Dowden 1992: particularly 3-21; Graf 1987: particularly 1-8, 43-50.

<sup>51</sup> Here the number of twelve gods is more significant and important than the gods who make up the group – Dionysos, for example, sometimes replaces Hestia; and the 'modern set' of twelve does not include notables such as Herakles, who is turned into an Olympian (Hdt. 2.44), or the Muses who are described by Hesiod as being Olympian (*Th.* 52.). For more on this see Dowden 2007: 43-46.

<sup>52</sup> Kearns 2010: 5, 32.

<sup>53</sup> Polinskaya 2010: 61.

<sup>54</sup> Another problematic and over-generalising term – through the archaic and early classical periods there is very little beyond common language that unifies 'Greeks', and even then we find rich dialectical differentiation. Even in the late classical and Hellenistic periods, during which time a concerted effort was made to create and maintain common 'Greekness', the extent of Greek association was mainly militaristic in nature. That is, communities aligned themselves with one another originally in order to protect themselves – not all of Greece, necessarily – from foreign invasion.



[mythological, poetic, and iconographic tradition], the main source of Greek imaginings of the divine world, as a delusive façade'.<sup>55</sup>

Homer and Hesiod, and later the classical tragedians, did not invent the gods with whom they worked and they did not introduce new gods into a socio-religious context in which they did not already exist. The influence exerted by these authors over the religious landscape was, more likely, through helping to cement associations between pre-existing local divinities and the more broadly defined 'panhellenic' gods who were represented in their works. Alongside this, these works helped to consolidate the relationships the gods maintained with one another and encouraged the wholesale alignment of more generalised attributes, behaviours, and epithets by which each god may be identified. It is this aspect that Herodotos refers to when he credits Homer and Hesiod with having ποιήσαντες θεογονίην Ἑλλήσι ('made a theogony for the Greeks').<sup>56</sup> Their greater influence was, perhaps, on the generations following theirs who were consciously looking to create a unified Hellenic identity<sup>57</sup> and were more open and accepting of 'truly' panhellenic practices and identities. For instance, the west pediment at Olympia depicts the fight between Lapithae and the Centaurs, showing Peirithous at the centre. Pausanias comments that the sculptor, Alkamenes, depicted this scene because Πειρίθουν τε εἶναι Διὸς ἐν ἔπεσι τοῖς Ὀμήρου δεδιδαγμένος ('he [Alkamenes] learned from Homer's poem that Peirithous was Zeus' son').<sup>58</sup> Although this clearly does not show definitive proof that Alkamenes was referencing a Homeric story when planning the pediment, it does show that when Pausanias himself viewed the sculpture he recalled the Homeric tale, and that whomever Pausanias had heard this story from was also reminded of the Homeric poem. The two stories – from Homer and the pediment – have had their backgrounds amalgamated to make a harmonious whole.

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<sup>55</sup> Parker 2011: 95.

<sup>56</sup> Hdt. 2.53.2.

<sup>57</sup> A Schachter 2000: 11.

<sup>58</sup> Paus. 5.10.8; cf. Hom. *Il.* 14.317-318.

The obvious problem here is the question of how widely disseminated Homer and Hesiod's works actually were, particularly in the late-archaic and early-classical periods, and to what extent different literary opinions on the gods were, or could have been, concurrently assimilated into well-established religious beliefs and practices, which were cemented in custom. Homer, for example, presents the gods in a vastly different way from Pindar. This is, in part, because of the nature of 'universal' gods. The presentations of the gods in Homer and Hesiod are, essentially, the poets' own ideas about divinity. In some ways individual divinities represent an amalgam of various cultic identities whose forms may be based on the presentation of the divine in Homer and Hesiod, but that are removed enough from these poetic divinities that each community, or indeed each individual, can imbue the gods they worship with their own notions of divine nature. Pindar on the other hand, notes Polinskaya, 'could make abstract statements about gods in general, and they would indeed have the same and equal relevance to any Greek; but he had to call upon specific gods, i.e. gods of specific cities and sites, to shower benevolence upon the victors and their communities, and hence the bipolar tension of his poetry, at once panhellenic and epichoric in scope'.<sup>59</sup> Homer and Hesiod were, arguably, much more likely to have been widely disseminated, and therefore more widely known, than Pindar. When utilising these literary sources as evidence for the common perception of the gods we must keep in mind not only a probable pattern of dissemination but, also, to what extent the author's views would actually have been smoothly integrated into common, established practices. Pindar may present an image of the gods different from those we find elsewhere, but that does not necessarily indicate that anyone accepted the views espoused in his odes. Alongside this, and particularly concerning classical Athenian theatre, we must also take the audience, both intended and actual, into consideration. Tragedy may have presented the gods in a recognisably 'panhellenic' manner but that presentation was not panhellenic in context.

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<sup>59</sup> Polinskaya 2010: 68.

The anthropomorphic appearance of the gods that literature and iconography uses – even in cult iconography – may imply that this is the sole way the Greeks imagined their gods. The Greeks viewed the gods as much more than an anthropomorphised version of *a something*. In the same way that Zeus could simultaneously be ‘Soter’ and ‘Chthonios’ with no disparity in the minds of the Greeks, he could simultaneously be the father of the gods, with a human-like form, who lives atop Mount Olympos, and be the sky or the flashing thunderbolt. The Greeks accepted that each of the Zeuses were one and the same, and there was not necessarily any contradiction in the idea that Zeus could be meaningfully represented as both the anthropomorphised father of the gods and an elemental force, and that these were two aspects of the same individual divinity, albeit with different titles. As Xenophon points out καὶ γὰρ Ζεὺς ὁ αὐτὸς δοκῶν εἶναι πολλὰς ἐπωνυμίας ἔχει (‘for Zeus, though thought to be the same, has many names’).<sup>60</sup> Elsewhere Xenophon delineates between different Zeuses after being told that his fiscal worries are the result of neglecting Zeus Meilichios, even though he is a regular worshiper of Zeus Basileus.<sup>61</sup> This is a difficult case as Zeus Meilichios is usually treated as being different from other Zeuses; nevertheless, it reinforces the idea that only in very specific circumstances should the dedication to one conception of Zeus be removed from any other variation of Zeus. Just as the identity of singular gods in universal mythological narratives and in local cultic practices may derive aspects from one another, the two disparate entities can be considered simultaneously as the same god, without either incarnation needing to encroach into the sphere of the other. That is to say, the Athena to whom the local Attic man makes offerings during the Panathenaia does not need to be informed by the Athena who assists Odysseus in Homer’s epic and vice versa. However, they can comfortably co-exist in his conception of the goddess as the same divinity with various aspects to be

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<sup>60</sup> Xen. *Symp.* 8.9.

<sup>61</sup> Xen. *Anab.* 7.8.4.

called upon at the appropriate time: Athena Polias during the Panathenaia and Odyssean Athena during recitation of Homer.

When discussing archaic and early classical cult it is much more apposite to talk about the potentially various, local representations of divinities and the ways in which they could also embody ideas that appear across various representations, as inter-regional, but not necessarily universal, 'Greek' gods. Because of the process of associating local gods with panhellenic identities there are some characteristics that are commonly shared throughout the Greek speaking world and, although not every representation of each god conforms to these, they become commonly recognisable attributes. One of the ways that this occurs is through the increased adoption of epithets, of both locality-derived names and more generic cult names.<sup>62</sup> The simple fact that localised variations of the divine exist, sometimes even in multiple versions of the 'same god' in a single *polis* indicates that the distinction of divine 'guises' between these identities was important to the communities that worshiped them.

We may even consider that the epithets and attributes that were adopted in the archaic period, following their use in Homer, are a separate case of 'local' divine identity; not one that is geographically local but, rather, temporally local – a mythic past 'local' of sorts. This could begin to explain why there are some very large discrepancies between early literary accounts that appear to offer an aetiology for cult practices and versions of those same stories in their own local cultic context. The Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, for example, may present an account of the Eleusinian Mysteries that could be considered aetiological in nature, and yet there are a large number of discrepancies between the presentation of the hymn and those in iconographical representations that have a stronger, more direct, association with the cult.

Alongside the influence of well-known and widely-disseminated literature, panhellenic attributes may also develop, and eventually be ascribed to local

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<sup>62</sup> Graf 2010: 67; Parker 2011: 67; A Schachter 2000: 9.

divinities, through syncretic relationships between different public and private macro- and micro-communities, and particularly those with relationships forged at shared-Hellenic festivals and sanctuaries like Delphi and Olympia. There are two main variants of the common shared Hellenic sanctuary: those that are 'local' and those that are 'global' in nature. Local common sanctuaries might, for example, serve a number of small, politically or socially connected *poleis* and, as Kearns points out, 'usually these cities were making a statement about their identity, in contrast to those which were excluded'.<sup>63</sup> In this way, the sanctuaries perform a function similar to that of more exclusive *polis*-centred<sup>64</sup> sanctuaries by helping forge a community identity. The federal meeting sanctuary of the Phokian κοινόν, the Phokikon, is an example of such a local common sanctuary. The Phokikon represents the creation of a shared identity for the cities who were members of the federation,<sup>65</sup> and in doing so also creates a space from which the 'other' is excluded. The Greekness of the excluded 'other' in this case reinforces the earlier assertion that shared Greek identity was a sporadically used tool rather than a permanent label. In contrast to the closed nature of *polis*-centred and local-common sanctuaries, global panhellenic sanctuaries were, theoretically, open to all Greeks, although these sanctuaries may have stipulated various exclusions in certain cases and there would certainly have been some *poleis* whose delegates and citizens were less welcome than others. For example, the Elians prevented the Spartans from entering or sacrificing at the Olympic sanctuary, and by extension excluded them from participation in the Olympic Games of 420; and this ban may have been upheld until 400.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, these important sanctuaries – most notably at Delphi and

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<sup>63</sup> Kearns 2010: 276.

<sup>64</sup> I use the term '*polis*-centred' in order to avoid the discussion on what constitutes 'state' cult activity. For more on state cults see Aleshire 1994: 9-16.

<sup>65</sup> McInerney 1999: 80, 157.

<sup>66</sup> Thouk. 5.49; Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.21. For further discussion on the length of the ban see Hornblower 2000: 212-225; Lattimore 1942. On this, Hornblower presents a thorough reading of the historical evidence, including Thoukydides, Xenophon and Pausanias' accounts and concludes that it is most likely that the ban did not last the period until 400, but was probably settled around 416. On this he says: 'if the Spartans had been excluded from the Olympic festival throughout the period of 420-400, I should have expected the fact to have made more of an impression on our sources'.

Olympia, but also Isthmia, Nemea, Delos and others – provided a location for the promulgation and development of a ‘common Hellenic’ identity, and all the interstate politicking and sharing of local customs that thrived in such an environment.

This would have most likely occurred on both a formal and an informal basis, and would have served to reinforce shared religious and social ideologies.<sup>67</sup> It is through this environment of sharing that we may account for various cultic similarities from *polis* to *polis*, particularly in cases where the *poleis* with ‘shared’ or similar customs were not geographically close to one another. It was in these locations that the individuals of various communities – big and small, public and private – interacted with one another, mingling ideas that they would later take away, and potentially alter slightly to suit their own local practices.

Although the emphasis may be on the cultivation and celebration of a common Greek heritage, participating at global panhellenic sanctuaries would still have meant different things to different communities of people,<sup>68</sup> particularly within the context of the quest for their own civic, social, community and individual identities. The various different communities of the Greeks did not, themselves, consider that each of their gods were the same, although they may have approached ‘panhellenic gods’ – that is, gods at panhellenic sanctuaries – with a similar amount of reverence that they paid to the gods of their own local communities.<sup>69</sup> These common, ‘universal’ panhellenic sanctuaries initially emerged as important interstate sanctuaries in the archaic period due mainly to their location; being on the (social, cultural, or geographical) periphery of the Hellenic world in the early archaic period, not directly controlled by any single powerful state and insulated from the political and social rivalries of the dominant *poleis* of the period.<sup>70</sup> Participation at global panhellenic sanctuaries most likely began sometime during

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<sup>67</sup> Morgan 1993: 18.

<sup>68</sup> Morgan 1993: 22.

<sup>69</sup> For further discussion on this see Polinskaya 2010: 61-67.

<sup>70</sup> Kearns 2010: 276; A Schachter 2000: 10; Snodgrass 1980: 55.

the eighth century, but was cemented into a formalised framework of worship, including the institution of the quadrennial games oscillation between Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia and Nemea, during the early sixth century.<sup>71</sup> Thereafter these major sanctuaries functioned as centres of religious, social, cultural and artistic sharing and learning. They were, at least in part, responsible for the propagation of a 'globalised' religious activity – shared and similar ritual activity, names and attributes of the gods – but they also served as a staging ground for advancements in artistic and architectural styles; as Pedley indicates, 'changes in the use of materials, in stylistic criteria, in the complexity of storytelling, and in artistic purpose and process can all be seen'.<sup>72</sup>

We can assume that the 'panhellenic' identity of the gods was similar to the image presented in the more widely disseminated works of literature and in large-scale iconographic representations at major, universally used, sites. Thus, panhellenic sanctuaries presented images of individual gods that conformed to these global conceptions. However, even in these great panhellenic sanctuaries we can also find evidence of local 'variations' or aspects of the gods appearing alongside the 'globalised', or panhellenic, divine image. Often these local variants have little or no discernible relationship to the image of the panhellenic deity.

Panhellenism is formed more or less by the wholesale adoption and adaptation of local divinities – who may or may not have shared the same name in the first place – which then become intercultural and interstate and have aspects that can be understood as 'commonly Greek'.<sup>73</sup> This, in large part, occurs when individuals, who are members of various sized *polis* and non-*polis* related religious communities, come into contact with one another and exchange ideas. It does not follow that these globally recognised traits were utilised in cultic practices in any or

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<sup>71</sup> Morgan 1993: 36.

<sup>72</sup> Pedley 2005: 127.

<sup>73</sup> This is, in part, helped along by the works of Homer and Hesiod, whose 'panhellenising' influence on the conception of Greek divinities cannot be unfelt. However, the cultic realities of 'panhellenised' divinities depart from Homer and Hesiod's ideas of the gods, and so they do not neatly fit into this model, which is more concerned with these cultic realities.

all parts of the Greek world and localised variations of each divinity would retain their own particular attributes. This is both in regards to their local 'honours' and in regards to local cultic and ritual practice, which would have maintained predominance over 'panhellenised' version of divinities in the everyday cultic lives of individuals. Local divine identities still made up the overwhelming majority of cult worship throughout the Greek speaking world, and local variants still coloured even those representations that had been 'panhellenised'. The panhellenic names given to these local identities, therefore, become a shorthand for simplifying a much more complex and nuanced system of divine worship. There are some areas of religious life where we can find a complete lack of regard for creating harmony in cultic practices from *polis* to *polis*. *Poleis*, for example, maintained their own ritual calendars without any form of coordination.<sup>74</sup> On this, Davidson remarks:

That so many fiercely independent *poleis*, acknowledging no overarching religious authority, managed, nevertheless, quietly to keep their "moons" and festivals more or less in step with each other over long periods is in itself quite remarkable, and it gives us a tangible illustration of how there is an "ancient Greek religion" to speak of, without their being a unitary "ancient Greece."<sup>75</sup>

Though we may consider that if festival dates were generally calculated as falling annually in the same month and during the same moon-phase, it would follow, logically, that different *poleis* would make similar slight adjustments that would keep their calendars more or less 'in-check' from year to year. Therefore, we do not need to assume that one was following the pattern set by another. Similarly, if festival calendars were kept in line with the agricultural seasons,<sup>76</sup> the solar shifts would be recorded individually by each *polis* and calendars would be naturally kept together without the need for coordination between the *poleis*.

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<sup>74</sup> Davidson 2007: 205.

<sup>75</sup> Davidson 2007: 205.

<sup>76</sup> Foxhall 1997: 101-105.



What we can deduce is that there are interlinking and overlapping aspects which become common to 'Greek religion', though a system of religious communities of various sizes – from one individual inscribing and burying a *katadesmos* to all the participants at the Olympic games – and which operated in both public and private spheres. In the cultic reality of the *poleis* of Greece, there was no overarching 'Greek religion', there was local variant practices which influenced, and were influenced by, other local variant practices of the same of similar divinities, who had become amalgamated over time.

### Myth and Ritual

In some circumstances, 'versions' of myths may appear to present an aetiology of ritual practice. That is, a myth could explain how a ritual came about, or how ritual actions related to the divinities involved in the practice. This explanatory myth may have appeared prior to the institution of the ritual, or may have come about in response to the establishment of the ritual as a reverse aetiology. In other cases, a pre-existing ritual may have been compounded with a pre-existing mythic narrative in order to give rise to a new ritual meaning, or to provide the ritual with an aetiological narrative where there had previously been no such mythological explanation.<sup>77</sup> However, there is no clear indication that this myth-ritual conjuncture is true of all narratives that we may term 'mythic' versions, or even myths. Alongside this, different versions of the same myth may present events differently, in some cases vastly so. In cases where connections may be visible, there is no reliable way of indicating which came first: the aetiological myth or the ritual, and in these circumstances, we cannot discount that a pre-existing myth was manipulated to fit the ritual practice being established.

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<sup>77</sup> Versnel 1990: 43. Versnel's chapter also provides an excellent and comprehensive introduction to the background of the variations of 'myth-ritual' theories.

Theories<sup>78</sup> which stated that myth was created directly out of ritual aetiology and that the function of myth was to explain ritual, were originally popular in Classics in the early twentieth century, although now mostly discredited. These included Harrison's myth and ritual theory,<sup>79</sup> Burkert's Sociobiological theory,<sup>80</sup> and social anthropology centred on the link between myth and society. Traditionally myth-ritual theories contended that the two entities could not exist without one another; that myth and ritual had an inextricable symbiotic relationship to one another that could not be undone. Although this strict application is certainly incorrect, as Kearns points out, 'it remains true that a large number of local Greek myths are in a sense secondary to a particular ritual, in that their purpose seems to be to give an explanation of the distinctive features of that ritual'.<sup>81</sup> Although, because of the way that myths have been passed down to us, though literary and iconographical 'versions', it is not always possible to distinguish where a mythic variant may be a traditional aetiological narrative or simply an invention of the poet or artisan, or a manipulation of a pre-existing myth to fit a ritual previously not associated with it. Tragedians are particularly suspected of these types of inventions and manipulations, and later corroborating evidence may simply have stemmed from their version, rather than any other 'original' or traditional version of the myth – if such an 'original' version is knowable. Either way, what we can deduce is that the poets and tragedians of the archaic and classical periods were 'working within a tradition which likes to have such mythical "explanations" and links with the heroic age'.<sup>82</sup> Mythic variants also often employ an image of the gods that is more universal than the ones found in local cultic practice, and local cultic traditions can reveal gods that seem substantially different from their mythic namesake. In this way, the local iconographical variant of a given myth, where found at the site of

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<sup>78</sup> For an overview see Csapo 2005: 132-180.

<sup>79</sup> Csapo 2005: 145; Schlesier 1991: 185-226, especially 189-196; Verrall and Harrison 1890: iii.

<sup>80</sup> Csapo 2005: 161-180; Burkert 1979: 35-58, 1983: 17-18.

<sup>81</sup> Kearns 2010: 68.

<sup>82</sup> Kearns 2010: 68, 72.

ritual activity, can give us a clearer picture of the myth as an aetiology as local mythic variants fit local cultic practice.

The difficulties in reconciling the gods of myth and the gods of cult have resulted in a recent tendency to overlook the role that the gods have played in ritual activity.<sup>83</sup> However, it was the gods, rather than the ritualised activity, which were the important aspect of religious life for the Greeks. As Henrichs comments: 'from a Greek point of view, the gods not only existed prior to the rituals practiced in their honour but were regarded as the ultimate *raison d'être* for these rituals'.<sup>84</sup> Taking the importance of the gods to ritual practice into account gives myth a raised position in religion, for mythic narrative was one of the main avenues for the Greeks to consider the personalities of the gods they worshiped, even where these personalities seemed to differ (to a greater or lesser extent) from the god they directly communicated with in cultic worship. Mythology is, therefore, an essential component of religion, rather than just a secondary consideration.

This does not mean, however, that myths or rituals cannot exist independently from one another. I am not intending to propose that they have an exclusively mutual relationship with one another, but only that in considering aspects of either we should be open to consider aspects of both. Both ritual and myth informed the way that the Greeks viewed and interacted with their gods and in order to attempt the formation of a complete analysis of the role of divinity – whether one individual, a connected group, or a complete pantheon – we should and must consider both. In any religion, gods not only reflect their worshipers,<sup>85</sup> but also are reflected by the society that produces them, and this includes not only in distinct ritual or cultic practice but also in representations in literary and visual culture. This must be particularly true in a society that directly depicts its divinities in literature, theatre, and art, as the Greeks do. Furthermore, both ritual and myth

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<sup>83</sup> Bremmer 2010: 15; Henrichs 2010: 25.

<sup>84</sup> Henrichs 2010: 26.

<sup>85</sup> J. E. Harrison 1912: 28.

can go some way to explaining what should *not* occur, rather than what should. Both can, separately or together, allow the participants (or audiences) to undergo an experience they would normally be forbidden from, or otherwise unable to undertake.<sup>86</sup> These experiences are often transitory and liminal in nature. Where ritual may present a symbolic version of an experience, myth can allow its protagonist actually to undergo the experience. Symbolic death and rebirth, for example, occurs in a number of different ritual types, including almost all initiatory-type rituals. However, in myth *actual* death and rebirth can be undertaken and experienced. When these experiences are enacted in a ritual setting, they become falsified, symbolic and reversible whereas these same experiences in myth are realistic, actual and irreversible.<sup>87</sup> Theseus and Herakles could travel into the Underworld while still alive and return unharmed, whereas the initiates at Eleusis could only play at such a journey by wandering the sanctuary looking for Persephone in the dark (if, indeed, this is what they were – or thought they were – doing).

By its very nature, myth itself is almost indefinable: as Burkert says, 'a simple definition will not do'.<sup>88</sup> For the purposes of the analysis contained within this thesis, I shall only focus on what may have constituted myth in archaic and classical Greece. I am not interested in creating a wider, delineable pattern of 'myth' that is equally applicable to all societies across all time periods. To do so, I think, would be both irrelevant and erroneous. I also do not think that myth, in this context, can or should be pared down into simple narrative structures, such as the general mythic-structure theories proposed by scholars like Propp and Lévi-Strauss. While a traditional structuralist approach may be useful elsewhere, I think that the wholesale shedding of narrative parts renders analysis almost irrelevant. A complex system of divinity and cult – such as the Greeks employed, particularly in relation to death-related

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<sup>86</sup> Versnel 1993: 3.

<sup>87</sup> Bremmer 2007: 43.

<sup>88</sup> Burkert 1979: 1, 143 n. 143.

practices – requires an equally complex system of aetiological and explanatory material, both mythic and cultic. In some ways, it is helpful to try to find connections between mythic narratives that may appear, initially, disparate from one another. In a study of this type, where the main focus is on the gods and the way that they are viewed and used, it is, nevertheless, useless to attempt to draw connections or parallels between otherwise unconnected narratives. In other words, as Calame comments:

The anthropological concept of myth, which has now become part of the shared knowledge of our academic culture, would seem to be relevant to ancient Greece only if the poetic stories of the Greeks are stripped of their literary form and reduced to a few proper names involved in a plot. It was only in manuals of mythography that the Greek stories, lifted out of their many diverse forms of expression, became little more than skeletons. These were then transformed into myths that, due to their now schematic form, could be said to exist on an abstract and transcendent plane. This is also why our contemporary mythologists of Antiquity have come to regard myth simply as a “traditional story” with social implications.<sup>89</sup>

This can also be true in cases in which there appear, initially, to be aetiological connections between rituals disconnected geographically or temporally. For example, we may find many similarities between the ‘mythic’ foundations of cult of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis and the cult of Persephone in Lokroi,<sup>90</sup> namely that each utilises Persephone’s mythic rape as an aetiological tool for ritual, but that does not necessarily signify that the two cults are, or should be, connected. One is a mystery cult that has agricultural significance and the other presents a vastly different Persephone as a marriage and (human-focused) fertility deity. Thus, we can see that even with a similar background narrative, these two cults bear very little resemblance to one another in practical terms.

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<sup>89</sup> Calame 2009: 5.

<sup>90</sup> Both examples will be discussed in greater detail in chapters five and four respectively.

To this end, my own reference to myth shall not be as complex as others previously have been. Simply, while recognising that there is no knowable 'traditional' or 'original' version of a story I refer only to mythic narratives. That is, retellings of well-known stories which may or may not have some form of aetiological connection to ritual (though the vast majority of those which are discussed in the context of this thesis will be viewed as being at least somewhat aetiological in nature). Each individual myth which we have extant, in whatever form they may have come down to us can, as Calame says, 'only be read in the particular version in which it reaches its audience and it is also important to avoid setting "myths" up as new universals'.<sup>91</sup>

### Divine Personifications

Parts of this thesis shall be concerned with divinities who may be considered as personifications of abstract concepts. Creating a strict division between, for example, lower-case-theta *thanatos* and upper-case-theta Thanatos (or m/Moira(i), k/Ker(es), e/Eriny(e)s) may initially appear to be a desirable goal for a study of this kind. However, not only is this something of an impossible task but, I think, is an erroneous approach to take because such a strict division does not exist in Greek culture. The main issue arises when one considers the strength of personification that, in literature and art, may range from a wholly realised divine being to an artistic interpretation of an abstract concept with very scanty personality.<sup>92</sup> The test of a true, wholly realised, divine personification should usually be evidence of cult, for, as Stafford points out, 'any figure to whom sacrifices are made must be deemed capable of acknowledging the fact, since those who make the sacrifices are hoping for a response'.<sup>93</sup> However, even this straightforward test can be misleading when dealing with Underworld and death-related personified divinities, because gods of

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<sup>91</sup> Calame 2009: 38.

<sup>92</sup> Stafford 2000: 2.

<sup>93</sup> Stafford 2000: 2.

this kind are not often the focus of cultic offerings. Although representation in visual culture is not, in and of itself, an indicator of a fully realised divine personification, most death-related personifications do have a visual presence.<sup>94</sup> Likewise, we cannot rely on the idiomatic English use of the capitalised abstract noun to denote personification as ancient Greek does not distinguish between fully personified and fully abstract version of nouns in this way.<sup>95</sup> One of the ways in which we can begin to see agency ascribed to nouns that appear to lie on the border between abstraction and personification in literature, is by looking at the verbs that may give abstract nouns action.<sup>96</sup> Verbs used primarily in active senses and usually applied to people or fully realised gods can help to create a personification when applied to abstract nouns. When Patroklos describes his death by saying ἄλλ' ἐμὲ μὲν κῆρ ἀμφέχανε στυγερή, ('but loathsome ker has gaped around me'),<sup>97</sup> his doom comes to life within the action of gaping – ἀμφέχανω.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that each mention of a specific abstract/personified noun may not necessarily relate the same level of personification as found elsewhere. What is in one place a wholly realised personified divinity may elsewhere be used in a strictly abstract sense. While this is especially evident when looking across authors or media it may also be the case within specific works. For example, in the *Iliad* *m*/Moirai may be used in a personified sense to mean Fate in one place and in another to refer simply to a lot or portion (of grain, for example). This problem is compounded when we consider that

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<sup>94</sup> By way of brief example, *LIMC* has entries for Thanatos, Ker, the Moirai and the Erinyes.

<sup>95</sup> And, in fact, even in various editions of texts the capitalisation or non-capitalisation of various sometime-personified nouns rests solely at the discretion of the editor and has no bearing on how the author may have originally intended each noun to be read. As well as this, as Stafford points out, the non-gendered nature of English, compared with the clear gender-structure of ancient Greek, can affect the way native-English speakers read personified or abstracted nouns: 'The basic distinction in English is between animate and inanimate: the neuter pronoun 'it' is applied to anything inanimate, whether a concrete object or an abstract concept; the moment I assign a masculine or feminine pronoun to a 'thing', it becomes animate. 'We will seek justice' brings the abstract to mind, but as soon as I add the qualification 'though she is elusive' it becomes clear that Justice in human form is meant'. Stafford 2000: 5.

<sup>96</sup> Burkert 2005: 4; Clarke 1999: 244; Stafford 2000: 10.

<sup>97</sup> Hom. *Il.* 23.78-79.

different characters within the epic may conceptualise m/Moira differently from one another.<sup>98</sup> What may be inferred, however, is that there is some interplay between wholly abstracted and wholly personified nouns, including instances from the range in between the two extremes. A 'mythic' (that is, wholly personified divinity) and a 'non-mythic' (a wholly abstract noun) instance of the same noun inform each other's meaning, both intra- and inter-textually (where we can safely assume that readers or viewers would have knowledge of other forms of the same noun). This is partly because personification of abstract nouns implicitly keeps the actual meaning of the noun within the personification. When full divinisation occurs etymological connections can be lost and proper names of divinities do not necessarily reflect what that divinity does or is. Aphrodite controls love, for example, but her name does not directly mean love, whereas (personified) Moira both controls and – by definition – *is* fate. Personification is, thus, about linguistics as much as it is about religion – especially when concerned with (possible) divinities who receive no cult. 'Personification', Burkert explains, 'is a complex phenomenon which unfolds at several levels, linguistic and poetic, speculative and religious; it is the interaction or confusion of these aspects which make it fascinating'.<sup>99</sup>

I will not give a definition of personification regarding how it relates to this study, but rather, mention aspects about personification(s) and why or how they relate to wholly- or partly-realised divinity, where relevant in the argument. It is enough to mention here that the concept of personification is problematic and that it is a concern that will need to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis throughout the study.

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<sup>98</sup> That is, the epic does not present a homogenous reading of personified-Fate (or any other personified divinity) because of the nature of the narrative, where, for instance, sometimes personifications are mentioned by characters commenting on their own circumstances, sometimes included as characters who affect the plot or are sometimes used by the author as a narrative device.

<sup>99</sup> Burkert 2005: 3.



## 2: Chthonism and Being Chthonic

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The concept of the chthonic has received much scholarly attention recently, which is surprising given the lack of ancient evidence discussing it. It appears that the term 'chthonic' did not have wide significance in the ancient world, and there is a notable drift away from using the term in modern scholarship of Greek religion. Van Straten, for instance, comments that it is inadvisable to use the terms 'chthonic' and 'chthonian' in archaeological literature because they have no real world cultic, archaeologically verifiable counterpart.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, and removed from the strictly archaeological context, Schleiser comments that 'the terms "Chthonic cult" or "Chthonian religion" should be discarded because they are misleading. They do not describe deviations from some existing norm'.<sup>2</sup> The idea that 'the chthonic' is represented by a regular deviation from a kind of 'normal' cult practices (and specifically sacrificial practices) is certainly erroneous. The ancient evidence appears to suggest that there is nothing that we might ordinarily label as a 'standard' set of sacrificial practices, and therefore we cannot hope to find that 'chthonic' practices deviate from this established set of rules, particularly in a uniform way. Even though there may be a number of ritual practices which are common to so-called 'chthonic' cults, we cannot find a neat distinction between 'chthonic' and 'non-chthonic' cultic practices. Thus, in a study of this nature, it is important to examine what should be meant by 'chthonic cult' or 'chthonian gods'.

In this chapter I am not aiming to provide an impermeable definition of the 'chthonic', but rather to show that it is not possible to create such a definition. There can be no sharp distinction between so-called 'chthonic' and 'ouranic' gods and rituals, (which should be treated together as a worshiper's concept of the divine and the ritual practice they undertake is intimately tied together in the worshiper's mind).

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<sup>1</sup> van Straten 1995: 167.

<sup>2</sup> Schleiser 1991/1992: 50.

However, this does not mean that we should not examine what chthonism is, even though it may seem at this stage like a fruitless exercise. The purpose of this examination is really to demonstrate that the term 'chthonic' (and associated terms) do not always have the same range of associations. This is particularly true of the way the word is used in the ancient sources, without specific definition. Because of this we should be wary of using the term without clarification.

#### Definition(s) of 'Chthonic'?

So-called chthonic divinities, and what constitutes a 'chthonic' god, have been the subject of much discussion recently, particularly in regard to chthonic and ouranic or Olympic sacrifice types.<sup>3</sup> 'Chthonic' gods were originally identified by Preller as being Underworld rulers, who send out evils to mankind.<sup>4</sup> Various working definitions were offered, which more or less mirrored the first half of Preller's hypothesis, until Fairbanks' 1900 article 'The Chthonic Gods of Greek Religion', in which he examined the use of the term chthonic in literature and cult and then looked at the nature of so-called 'chthonic' divinities in practice. What he found, however, was that the 'cut-and-dried' definitions previously used were not useful for distinguishing chthonic from non-chthonic gods, practices, or rituals:

The conclusion is unavoidable that we are not justified in describing any one type of worship as distinctly chthonic... Gods connected with souls, i.e. chthonic gods in the narrower sense of the term, belong to a class of gods who are easily roused to anger and who have special blessings to bestow, and in the worship of these gods propitiatory sacrifice and mystic sacrifice are the commoner forms of worship.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See for example, Mikalson 2010: 36-39; Parker 2011: 80-84, 283-286; Versnel 2011: 144-145; Polinskaya 2013: 63-64, 78-80; Hägg and Alroth 1997; Schleiser 1991/1992; Scullion 1994, 2000; Henrichs 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Preller 1837: 187-188.

<sup>5</sup> Fairbanks 1900: 259. Fairbanks did, however, create 'classes' of divinities that he considered to be strictly chthonic in nature, these included: i) gods associated with souls (what he described as the 'poetic' chthonism), ii) chthonic used as a term to describe agrarian gods (the 'cultic' chthonism), iii) heroes and iv) souls of the dead (the '*chthonioi* proper'). Fairbanks considered the first two classes to be the most important and stressed that they should not be confused or conflated into one another. cf. Fairbanks 1900: 247, 248-249.

Only three years later Harrison published *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, and the subject of the distinction between Olympian and Chthonian religion was put at the forefront of her study. She distinguished between Olympic and chthonic gods on the basis of ritual distinction, and recognised that this distinction was separate from any terminology that the Greeks themselves used.<sup>6</sup> Her theory, based heavily on Isokrates' comments on the differences between gods, which will be discussed below, was that the gods had a nature that was expressed by mortals through varying ritual practices, and that this was either chthonic or Olympic. This allowed for gods of the same name to be both 'chthonic' and 'Olympic' in nature. To use Harrison's own example, 'Zeus who is Maimaktes, the Raging One, is also Meilichios, Easy-to-be-entreated, a god of vengeance and a god of love'.<sup>7</sup>

The history of scholarship related to the discussion of the Olympian/chthonian dichotomy has been thoroughly elucidated by Schleiser in her 1991/2 article 'Olympian versus Chthonian Religion'.<sup>8</sup> She concluded that scholarship has moved away from a strict division between the two 'forms' of religious practice and instead now, rightly, focuses on the shades of meaning that are present both in divine nature and real-world cultic practices. She goes on to stress the importance of understanding each cultic instance within its own context while continuing to take a wider picture of the divinities presented into account. Scholarship has tended to focus on the public act of animal sacrifice when discussing the Olympian/chthonian dichotomy in cultic practices. The arbitrary nature of division between 'Olympian' and 'chthonian' was emphasised by Kearns, who describes the latter as 'deities connected in some way with the earth or Underworld, along with the heroes, who are generally conceived of as the special dead'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> J. E. Harrison 1903: 7.

<sup>7</sup> J. E. Harrison 1903: 8.

<sup>8</sup> Schleiser 1991/1992: 38-51.

<sup>9</sup> Kearns 2010: 15.

What follows from the definitions that have been offered up since that of Preller is that it is not helpful to follow his suggestion that 'chthonic gods' specifically allotted evil things to men. As Parker points out in his own discussion of the Olympian and chthonian distinction: 'Greek religion was not dualist, and all gods were potentially sources of harm as well as of benefit, of benefit as well as harm'.<sup>10</sup> Parker's own definition of chthonism does not include the idea of punishment or evils being given out to men by a special class of gods, rather:

The adjective *chthonios*, of the earth, or closely comparable expressions, are from time to time applied to the following classes of being, and sometimes to more than one simultaneously: (1) the ordinary dead; (2) the powerful dead, the heroes; (3) gods associated with the underworld such as Persephone, Hades/Plouton, Hecate, Hermes and groups such as the Erinyes/Eumenides/Semnai; (4) the gods of agriculture, Earth, Demeter, and (in one of his aspects) Zeus. When applied to Demeter and Zeus, the epithet "earthy" may primarily indicate not a place of residence but a sphere of activity, agriculture. Even so, the fact that, Olympians though they are (so too is Hermes), they can receive the chthonian epithet, *proves that the distinction between the two classes is not an absolute one*.<sup>11</sup>

This does, indeed, show that the distinction is not absolute. There are Olympian gods who receive chthonic epithets and there are traditionally chthonic gods who have ouranic aspects as well – Persephone, for example, is traditionally understood as belonging to a 'class' of chthonic gods although she has many non-chthonic attributes, and there are many non-chthonic ritual practices associated with her.

The argument for non-exclusivity was made by Scullion when he acknowledged that 'difficulty arises only when we regard Olympian and chthonian as mutually exclusive categories'.<sup>12</sup> What Scullion emphasised, though, mirrored in part what Harrison had discussed ninety-one years earlier: that there was a basic polarity to be found within *ritual practices*, and that these ritual practices were well-

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<sup>10</sup> Parker 2011: 80.

<sup>11</sup> Parker 2011: 80-81. Emphasis my own.

<sup>12</sup> Scullion 1994: 90.

established by tradition.<sup>13</sup> There is a pattern of practices by which one can designate a given ritual as chthonian or Olympian. The major problem with Scullion's definition of 'chthonic' stems from his methodological approach which is, I feel, erroneously based. He appears to have selected (arbitrarily?) ritual elements which he considers to be 'chthonic' in nature and to use those to explain rites as being strictly 'chthonic'. For example, he takes piglet holocaust to be indicator of chthonic practice. This is problematic when one takes into account his almost complete lack of discussion on definitions of the term 'chthonic' as including agrarian or fertility rites. What we find, in the Greek world, is a system of rituals which are inextricably bound together and that inform one another,<sup>14</sup> and this is as much a process of the individual worshipper taking (consciously or subconsciously) ideas and practices from one cultic context or community into another.

However, the idea of pre-defined 'chthonic' ritual attributes is still prevalent in definitions of the chthonic, and this is in part because short definitions require generalisations to be made. What is important is to acknowledge that the ritual attributes that are designated as being 'chthonic' may not always indicate 'chthonic' rituals or divinities and so we must remember to examine individual context.<sup>15</sup> Thus we find definitions such as Polinskaya's:

The main determinants of the [Olympian-Chthonian] paradigm are the distinctive types of sacrifice, ritual actions, and modes of worship (time, place) offered to deities. Blood sacrifices (on a built altar) of animal victims, of whose cooked flesh human partake in a feast "shared" by gods, is ascribed to the so-called Olympian deities and Olympian rituals. Conversely, unburnt food offerings deposited into a pit in the ground, or holocaust sacrifices, which are not shared by gods and humans, since humans do not use any part of the sacrificial animal, are associated with Chthonian worship. In accordance with this paradigm, certain features of cult and ritual are indicators of respectively the Olympian or Chthonian nature of deities, and not

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<sup>13</sup> Scullion 1994: 98.

<sup>14</sup> cf. Burkert 1985: 202.

<sup>15</sup> Failure to examine wider ritual context is, in part, the reason I take exception with Scullion's wholesale application of pre-defined 'chthonic' attributes to label rituals and divinities as such.

only of rituals... In most cases, when a scholar uses a certain detail of cultic data as an indicator of the Chthonian nature of that cult, such identification does not really tell us anything more illuminating than what we already knew before this label was attached.<sup>16</sup>

Polinskaya goes on to comment that we should refrain from applying the term 'chthonic' unless it is applied by ancient sources.<sup>17</sup> And, to further emphasise the point that we should be wary of context before labelling a divinity or ritual as chthonic, she says, 'while no one would argue that there were different types of ritual possibilities in offering sacrifices, prayers, and so on, it is a big leap to argue that these varieties were clearly labelled, or that the labels were uniform throughout the Greek world'.<sup>18</sup>

Discussions of the distinction between Olympian and an 'other' were also relevant in the ancient world. For example, Isokrates commented that:

ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν θεῶν τοὺς μὲν τῶν ἀγαθῶν αἰτίους ἡμῖν ὄντας Ὀλυμπίους προσαγορευομένους, τοὺς δ' ἐπὶ ταῖς συμφοραῖς καὶ ταῖς τιμωρίαις τεταγμένους δυσχερεστέρας τὰς ἐπωνυμίας ἔχοντας, καὶ τῶν μὲν καὶ τοὺς ἰδιώτας καὶ τὰς πόλεις καὶ νεῶς καὶ βωμοὺς ἰδρυμένους, τοὺς δ' οὐτ' ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς οὐτ' ἐν ταῖς θυσίαις τιμωμένους, ἀλλ' ἀποπομπὰς αὐτῶν ἡμᾶς ποιοῦμένους.

In the case of gods too I observe that those who bring men blessings are called Olympians, while those responsible for calamities and punishment have less pleasant names; private individuals and cities have founded temples and altars of the one group, while the other is honoured neither in sacrifices nor in prayers, but we perform rites of expulsion against them.<sup>19</sup>

Norlin's Loeb edition of the text glosses this passage with 'the contrast here is between Zeus, Apollo, Athena, etc., and the under-world deities Hades, Persephone, the Furies, etc.', although from the passage this strict distinction is less than clear.

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<sup>16</sup> Polinskaya 2013: 63-64.

<sup>17</sup> Polinskaya 2013: 64.

<sup>18</sup> Polinskaya 2013: 79.

<sup>19</sup> Isok. 5. 117; trans. Parker.

Similarly, Nock conjectures that this group 'probably' refers to Hekate, the Erinyes, Hades, Thanatos, the entourage of Hekate, the *alastores*, the *keres*, the *strinx* 'or something like Envy or the evil eye'.<sup>20</sup> While Nock's suggestion does include divinities that we might more easily fit into an idea of 'negative' divinities, it also includes – at the forefront – 'chthonic' gods.

As we shall see throughout this thesis the cultic reality was quite the opposite from Isokrates' very black and white distinction. Parker rightly comments that Isokrates 'exaggerates to make a particular rhetorical point that has nothing to do with religion'.<sup>21</sup> This passage, therefore, does not necessarily indicate Isokrates' own beliefs regarding the nature of the gods, and neither can it indicate any form of popular belief. In the context of this section of the speech, Isokrates is attempting to persuade Philip to treat the Greeks with a policy of kindness, gentleness, and humanity rather than with harshness.<sup>22</sup> As Isokrates comments, harsh treatment affects both the one who is exercising harshness and those who are the recipients of it. So it is with the gods, the Greeks offering worship to the 'Olympian' gods and expelling the more negative divinities from the city. Isokrates does not make it clear that these 'negative' divinities should be considered as what we might commonly define as 'chthonic' gods, but the gods might, rather, be more akin to lesser 'vengeance' gods like the Erinyes or *elasteroi*, and this is what other modern commentators have indicated as well.<sup>23</sup> There is not really any reason why so-called 'chthonic' divinities associated with the myths of the Olympians, such as Hades and Persephone, might not be included in the former category, considering (especially in the case of Persephone) that real-world reality included 'altars and temples' dedicated to the goddess.

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<sup>20</sup> Nock 1986: 600.

<sup>21</sup> Parker 2011: 80.

<sup>22</sup> Isok. 5.116.

<sup>23</sup> Laistner 1927: 162.

The term ἀποπομπαί has no close English parallel. Parker, above, translates the term as ‘rites of expulsion’, Harrison as ‘ceremonies of riddance’.<sup>24</sup> The second-century CE lexicographer, Harpokration references Isokrates in his entry on ἀποπομπας<sup>25</sup> and further comment that Apollodoros dedicated a book of his treatise *Concerning the Gods* on a discussion of the ἀποπομπαῖοι, the ‘sending away gods’ or ‘gods of aversion’, who would presumably have been the focus on these kinds of rites. Pausanias also mentions an altar dedicated to the Ἀποτρόπαιοι at Titane.<sup>26</sup> The presence of ἀποπομπαῖοι as distinct divinities throws into question the meaning of Isokrates comment on ‘nameless’ gods having rites of expulsion performed against them. The nature of the ἀποτρόπαιοι means that they would turn evils away of their own accord, and likewise ἀποπομπαῖοι indicates that evils are being led away, rather than forcibly expelled. Isokrates is, thus, not necessarily referring to these ‘nameless’ gods having rites of expulsion performed ‘against them’, but rather that the divinities are viewed as being complicit in the expulsion of evils from the city. This cannot be a reference to ‘major’ chthonic divinities such as Hades or Persephone, and certainly cannot be a reference to ‘chthonic’-as-agrarian-type divinities such as Demeter. There is a possibility that it could refer to gods like the Erinyes, but Isokrates would have been familiar with the story in Aischylos’ *Eumenides*, in which the Erinyes are welcomed into Athens and, therefore, honoured rather than expelled. Furthermore, this would be far from a wholesale commentary on the nature of Olympic versus chthonic divinities. What Isokrates might be commenting on is less a form of ‘divinity proper’ and more what we might refer to as daimons or even heroes. Henrichs demonstrated that ‘special’ categories of the dead<sup>27</sup> were referred to as ἀνώνυμοι (‘nameless’) and that there was a

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<sup>24</sup> J. E. Harrison 1903: 8. Harrison also comments that the closest we might come to understanding these rituals is through modern ceremonies of exorcism, but without the magical connotation and the ‘degraded superstition’.

<sup>25</sup> Harpokrat. s.v. ἀποπομπας. “Ἰσοκράτης Φιλίππῳ. ἀποπομπαῖοί τινες ἐκαλοῦντο θεοί, περὶ ὧν Ἀπολλόδωρος ἐν ζ’ περὶ θεῶν διείλεκται’.

<sup>26</sup> Paus. 2.11.1.

<sup>27</sup> For more on the ‘special dead’ see Introduction, and cf. Garland 1985: 77-103.



‘tendency to characterise the dead and their world by using negative modifiers’ such as this.<sup>28</sup> As we saw above, the dead, and particularly the ‘special dead’ and heroes were generally included in definitions of the chthonic, and specific categories of special dead are believed to assist the living in, for example, the delivery of *katadesmoi*.<sup>29</sup>

Roughly contemporary to Isokrates, Plato also distinguishes between Olympic and chthonic gods,<sup>30</sup> and as with Isokrates we cannot take this as reflecting any cultic reality. Plato says that:

πρῶτον μὲν, φαμέν, τιμὰς τὰς μετ’ Ὀλυμπίους τε καὶ τοὺς τὴν πόλιν ἔχοντας θεοὺς τοῖς χθονίοις ἂν τις θεοῖς ἄρτια καὶ δεύτερα καὶ ἀριστερὰ νέμων ὀρθότατα τοῦ τῆς εὐσεβείας σκοποῦ τυγχάνοι, τὰ δὲ τούτων ἄνωθεν τὰ περιττὰ καὶ ἀντίφωνα, τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν ῥηθείσιν νυνδὴ.

First of all, we say, if—after the honours paid to the Olympians and the gods who keep the State—we should assign the Even and the Left as their honours to the gods of the under-world, we would be aiming most straight at the mark of piety — as also in assigning to the former gods the things superior, the opposites of these.<sup>31</sup>

And later in the *Laws*:

ὁ μὲν γὰρ δὴ νόμος ἐρεῖ δώδεκα μὲν ἑορτὰς εἶναι τοῖς δώδεκα θεοῖς, ὧν ἂν ἡ φυλὴ ἐκάστη ἐπώνυμος ᾗ, θύοντας τούτων ἐκάστοις ἔμμηνα ἱερά, χορούς τε καὶ ἀγῶνας μουσικούς, τοὺς δὲ γυμνικούς, κατὰ τὸ πρέπον προσνέμοντας τοῖς θεοῖς τε αὐτοῖς ἅμα καὶ ταῖς ὥραις ἐκάσταις, γυναικείας τε ἑορτὰς, ὅσαις χωρὶς ἀνδρῶν προσήκει καὶ ὅσαις μὴ, διανέμοντας. ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὸ τῶν χθονίων καὶ ὅσους αὐτῶν θεοὺς οὐρανίους ἐπονομαστέον καὶ τὸ τῶν τούτοις ἐπομένων οὐ συμμεικτέον ἀλλὰ χωριστέον, ἐν τῷ τοῦ Πλούτωνος μηνὶ τῷ δωδεκάτῳ κατὰ τὸν νόμον ἀποδιδόντας, καὶ οὐ δυσχεραντέον πολεμικοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὸν τοιοῦτον θεόν, ἀλλὰ τιμητέον ὡς ὄντα ἀεὶ τῷ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένει ἄριστον.

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<sup>28</sup> Henrichs 1994: 55.

<sup>29</sup> Faraone 1991a: 3, 22 n. 26; Larson 1995: 118.

<sup>30</sup> Pl. *Laws*. 717a-b, 828c-d.

<sup>31</sup> Pl. *Laws*. 717a-b. trans. Bury.

For the law will state that there are twelve feasts to the twelve gods who give their names to the several tribes: to each of these they shall perform monthly sacrifices and assign choirs and musical contests, and also gymnastic contests, as is suitable both to the gods themselves and to the several seasons of the year; and they shall ordain also women's festivals, prescribing how many of these shall be for women only, and how many open also to men. Further, they must determine, in conformity with the law, the rites proper to the nether gods, and how many of the celestial gods should be invoked, and what of the rites connected with them should not be mingled but kept apart, and put them in the twelfth month, which is sacred to Pluto; and this god should not be disliked by men who are warriors, but honoured as one who is always most good to the human race.<sup>32</sup>

The picture that emerges from the two major mentions in Plato's *Laws* is that of a system where Olympic gods should be honoured above chthonic divinities, and that these two cultic types should not be mixed in worship together.<sup>33</sup> The first passage makes this distinction by equating the Olympian gods with the concepts of the odd (number) and with the right. Both of these, according to the Pythagorean doctrine of opposites are seen as superior to their counter.<sup>34</sup> Plato's account should not be taken as evidence for real-world cultic practice<sup>35</sup> and Nock suggests that 'Plato's emphasis on a separation of chthonic and heavenly gods... represents a theoretical hardening of the division of categories into a sharp contrast' that is 'contrary to common custom'.<sup>36</sup> Plato's work does not represent an accurate reflection of cultic life, but rather the philosopher's own formulation of what he perceives as a required separation. The cultic evidence suggests a sharply different picture. There appears to be a recognition that there are differences between the Olympic/ouranic gods

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<sup>32</sup> Pl. *Laws*. 828b-d. trans. Bury.

<sup>33</sup> The idea that Plato presents regarding the division of honours as Olympic first, followed by chthonic relates to the worshiper's piety (εὐσέβεια) being best served by first giving honour (τιμὰί) to the Olympic gods before turning to any chthonic worship. cf. Schleiser 1997: 1188.

<sup>34</sup> Arist. *Metaph.* 986a. cf. Lloyd 1962.

<sup>35</sup> as was done by, for example, Hermann 1846: 56, 56 n. 56; Henrichs 1991: 162-163 and n. 162.

<sup>36</sup> Nock 1986: 595. See also Scullion 2005: 24.

and those gods who reside below in Attic tragedy, but this does not automatically indicate a ritual distinction.<sup>37</sup>

More recently, Henrichs has nicely summed up the prevailing definition of 'chthonic':

In ancient as well as modern usage, expressions like "the chthonians" or "chthonic powers" designate all the various denizens of the chthonian realm, including named or unnamed chthonian gods (whether attached to the soil or connected to the Underworld) as well as cult heroes and the common dead.<sup>38</sup>

I take a similar approach in this thesis, and thus, use the term chthonic with the specific meaning of 'underground' gods, whether that means Underworld gods or gods who have aspects that render their particular function as 'underground' in some way, agrarian gods, for instance. In purely ritualistic terms there are not great differences between 'ouranic' and 'chthonic' practices. Details may vary to a greater or lesser degree – the use of wine or wineless libations for example – but ritual process follows basically the same pattern.<sup>39</sup> As I do not consider the heroes or hero cult, or the dead themselves in this thesis I do not purposefully exclude these groups from consideration,<sup>40</sup> rather they are omitted from analysis for practical reasons.

### 'Chthonic' Epithets

Cult epithets are a consistent feature of Greek religious life throughout the archaic and classical periods, and continue in use well into the Late Antique period.<sup>41</sup> Parker describes two distinct ways in which cult epithets work: 'one looks upwards, to the heavens: it differentiates and selects among the powers of the gods. One looks

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<sup>37</sup> See Aisch. *Ag.* 89-90; Soph. *Ant.* 1070-1073; Eur. *fr.* 912.6-8 (Nauck).

<sup>38</sup> Henrichs 2005: 48.

<sup>39</sup> Auffarth 2005: 19. That is to say, 'basically the same pattern' as far as there is what one could describe as a 'normal' ritual process that neatly fits onto all or most ritual practices. What I mean to imply is that so-called chthonic ritual practices do not deviate significantly from what we could consider to be normal practice in any other context in the Greek world.

<sup>40</sup> For more on the dead and heroes as chthonic beings see Schleiser 1997: 1187.

<sup>41</sup> Parker 2003b: 173.

downwards: it gives names to the sanctuaries of the gods here on earth'.<sup>42</sup> Chthonic epithets, including the direct epithets 'Chthonios' and 'Chthonia', serve the same purpose as other cultic epithets; in chapter five we shall see an example of the 'Chthonia' epithet being used to describe the powers of Demeter, and simultaneously lending the name to her festival. Hermes often receives the epithet 'Chthonios', both in literature and in inscriptions,<sup>43</sup> and several other divinities are similarly referred to as chthonic in literature.<sup>44</sup>

In cult, several divinities appear to have chthonic epithets (either 'Chthonios/a' or epithets which have been categorised by scholars as being chthonic in nature). We find, for example, Demeter Chthonia,<sup>45</sup> Ge Chthonia,<sup>46</sup> Hermes Chthonios,<sup>47</sup> Persephone Chthonia,<sup>48</sup> Zeus Chthonios,<sup>49</sup> and Hekate Chthonia.<sup>50</sup> Mentions of *Chthoniai Theai* more generally refer to Demeter and Persephone.<sup>51</sup> For non-'Chthonios/a' epithets we find, for example, Hermes Pompaaios ('guide') and Psychopompaaios ('guide of souls'),<sup>52</sup> and Demeter and Ge Anesidora ('sender up of gifts').<sup>53</sup> While we might expect to find more examples of Ge being given the epithet

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<sup>42</sup> Parker 2003b: 177. The examples Parker uses to illustrate this point are Zeus Meilichios and Artemis of Brauron. Zeus Meilichios was not tied to a geographic location but the epithet gives a sense of the aspect of the god who is being offered worship, whereas when one was at the sanctuary Brauron it might be just as likely to refer to 'Artemis' without her topographic epithet because that was implied by the location, the sanctuary and the religious occasion.

<sup>43</sup> for example, in literature: Aisch. *Cho.* 1, 124b, 727, *Pers.* 628, *fr.* 273a; Eur. *Alk.* 744-745; Soph. *Aj.* 832; Aristoph. *Fr.* 1126, 1138, 1145; in epigraphical texts: *SEG* 43:272, 27:200, 32:602; *IG* IX<sup>2</sup> 638, and see below.

<sup>44</sup> Zeus: Hes. *Th.* 465; Soph. *OC.* 1606. Titans: Hes. *Th.* 697. Ge: Aisch. *Pers.* 640-642. Demeter or Demeter and Persephone: Hdt. 6.134.1, 7.153.2. Unspecified 'chthonic' gods: Aisch. *Supp.* 24-25, *Cho.* 359, 399, 476; *Pers.* 640-642; Eur. *fr.* 868.1; Soph. *OC.* 1568, *Pho.* 1320-1321.

<sup>45</sup> See chapter five for detailed discussion of cults of Demeter Chthonia.

<sup>46</sup> For example, *IG* III App. 99; *IG* Bulg I<sup>2</sup> 398; Audollent 1904: no. 79.

<sup>47</sup> See below for discussion of Hermes; Hermes Chthonios is the most prevalent chthonic-epitheted god in epigraphical texts.

<sup>48</sup> *AA* (1907) 126; see Jordan 1985: no. 170.

<sup>49</sup> Zeus Chthonios is mentioned, along with Ge Chthonia, on the festival calendar from Mykonos, *SIG* 615; Paus. 2.2.8, 5.14.8; cf. Cook 1914: 668 and n. 663.

<sup>50</sup> For example, *IG* III App. 104, 105, 106, 107, 108; *SEG* 30:326. Most representations of Hekate Chthonia are much later in date than the study in this thesis, see also chapter six for further discussion.

<sup>51</sup> Schleiser 1997: 1187.

<sup>52</sup> See below for discussion of Hermes.

<sup>53</sup> Demeter: Paus. 1.31.4; Ge: *MDAI(A)* 37 (1912) 288.19.

*Chthonia*, it in fact only occurs once in the epigraphical sources, and even then the offerings are in conjunction with Zeus Chthonios.<sup>54</sup> Cultically, the epithet is most associated with Demeter, as we shall see in chapter five. There are also cases in which divinities are classified as having 'chthonic' characteristics where the epithet does not provide a clear Underworld or agrarian theme, and links to the Underworld are tenuous or erroneously described.<sup>55</sup>

One of the most recognisable cases of this non-direct chthonic epithet is the cults of Zeus Meilichios – the kindly one – which is often described by scholars as having a chthonic character.<sup>56</sup> For example, Mikalson states that 'Zeus Meilichios... was certainly chthonic',<sup>57</sup> and Lalonde states that 'Zeus Meilichios was viewed as a god of marked chthonic character'.<sup>58</sup> In cases such as these the attribution is made by scholars onto gods who are not unambiguously connected to the Underworld but, in some cases, share some characteristics or ritual similarities with divinities who do have such a connection.<sup>59</sup> What the Zeus Meilichios example demonstrates is that labelling a divinity as 'chthonic' is an attempt to say something about the intrinsic nature of a god, particularly where there is no ancient description of chthonic character. The concept of chthonism is markedly more complex and nuanced than these simple labels can convey, particularly when many readers bring their own preconceived idea of chthonism to discussion. Without proper qualification regarding the intent of the term in a specific context, there can be no meaningful comment regarding the way that a divinity was viewed in the ancient world.

A brief examination of the inscriptional evidence shows that the epithet chthonios/a was widely applied to various divinities, over a large time frame, and as Polinskaya has commented, the use of the term was not at all evenly distributed

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<sup>54</sup> SEG 615; for Zeus Chthonios as an agrarian god cf. LSCG 96.25; Hes. WD. 465.

<sup>55</sup> Such as Scullion's (1994) example of Koan Athena Polias.

<sup>56</sup> For example, Johnston 1999: 57; Burkert 1985: 201; Scullion 2005: 25; J. E. Harrison 1903: 14-16, 19.

<sup>57</sup> Mikalson 1983: 64.

<sup>58</sup> Lalonde 2006: 45.

<sup>59</sup> Parker 2003a: 329. cf. Henrichs 2005: 57.

throughout the Greek world.<sup>60</sup> The majority of inscriptional instances occur in Magna Graecia, with significant numbers in Asia Minor and Attika, but much smaller numbers elsewhere, particularly noteworthy is the fact that there are so few instances in the Peloponnese, especially considering the cult of Demeter Chthonia in Hermione, which will be discussed in chapter five. Chthonic epithets in cult tend to indicate that a divinity has an individualised function that is chthonic in some way, either agrarian or Underworld, and this aspect is only one component of a wider divine makeup. This is no different from the way that non-chthonic epithets are used in the Greek cultic landscape.

Literary uses of chthonic epithets are more likely to indicate that a god should be conceptualised as a specific type of character; they are presented as a chthonic god (either in the 'Underworld' or the 'agrarian' sense of the term), rather than having 'chthonic' characteristics or traits which are ritually relevant.<sup>61</sup> Gods in literature often appear, as Given comments regarding Dionysos in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, as 'disconcertingly human',<sup>62</sup> and they are very different to the ways that gods are represented in the artefacts of cult: epigraphy and iconography. This is reflected in the way that other (mortal) characters interact with them, from their corporeal physicality (and therefore, direct ability to interact with other characters), to the ways they are used by other characters within the plot. For example, in life people tended to credit the gods for positive outcomes in their life, but lay blame for bad at the feet of fortune, fate or a daemon; in literature, blame for negative things is usually laid squarely with the gods, either generally or with a specific, named god.<sup>63</sup> The vast majority of instances in tragedy particularly which involve the epithet Chthonios/a are, however, indirect invocation of a divine character who is usually absent.<sup>64</sup> Thus, what we often find in literary uses of the epithet is a character

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<sup>60</sup> Polinskaya 2013: 79.

<sup>61</sup> Schleiser 1997; Polinskaya 2013: 79.

<sup>62</sup> Given 2009: 115.

<sup>63</sup> Mikalson 1991: 18.

<sup>64</sup> For a catalogue of instances see appendix two.

attempting to say something about the narrative rather than the ritual nature of the specific god being invoked.

#### Literally Chthonic: Agriculture and the Chthonic

The relationship between death and agriculture has already been well noted through the definitions of 'chthonic' offered above, and it extends through a vast number of death-related 'chthonic' divinities and cultic practices. For example, in chapter four we will see an example of a cult of Persephone in which the goddess takes on both the role of queen of the Underworld and embodies elements of traditional fertility goddesses. When 'chthonic' labels are applied to divinities who do not traditionally reside in the Underworld (or have some other death-related function) the indication is that they represent something being put into the soil of the mortal world, rather than into the everlasting 'ground below' of the netherworld. For example, the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, with its explicit concern with agriculture, indicates that Demeter hid the seeds in the earth in order to cast barrenness over the world.<sup>65</sup> This is not meant to have any kind of supernatural meaning, or to indicate that the seeds have somehow been sent into the netherworld (that is, growing down instead of up). It merely shows that seeds which are, in the normal course of sowing, buried into the earth are, for now, not being allowed to grow though the will of the goddess. As, by definition, χθόνιος primarily means 'in, under, or beneath the earth',<sup>66</sup> both Underworld and agrarian permutations are relevant.

There is a large amount of cross-over between chthonic-as-Underworld and chthonic-as-agrarian contexts and, therefore, in conceptualisations of divinities. Gods can, as Cook comments, be 'at once chthonian and agrarian'.<sup>67</sup> We find this

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<sup>65</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 307-308.

<sup>66</sup> The LSJ indicates that the term should include both agrarian and 'gods of the Underworld' meanings, and additionally notes that χθόνιος can have autochthonous or provenance connotations (that is, 'sprung from the earth'), or be applied to things which are 'of the earth'.

<sup>67</sup> Cook 1914: 1139.

in 'traditional' chthonic goddesses, Persephone and Demeter.<sup>68</sup> There are several examples of non-agrarian 'chthonic' divinities as well; Hades,<sup>69</sup> for example, and Hermes Chthonios, Charon and Thanatos.<sup>70</sup> Less commonly we find divinities who are described as being chthonic but who have wholly agrarian attributes: thus we find Parker's concept that in the case of gods such as these (he specifically mentions Demeter and Zeus) the adjective might be best rendered 'earthy'.<sup>71</sup> While there are clearly many instances in which 'chthonic' Demeter(s) do have a direct relationship to the Underworld, either through Persephone/Kore or in her own right, there are many agrarian-themed festivals of Demeter which are not directly Underworld related,<sup>72</sup> and these do not have chthonic-epithets or elements. Zeus Chthonios appears in very few inscriptions,<sup>73</sup> and briefly in Hesiod,<sup>74</sup> Sophokles,<sup>75</sup> and Pausanias.<sup>76</sup> There is no question that both Demeter and Zeus are worshiped as agrarian gods.<sup>77</sup> However, this only rarely manifests as worship in a 'chthonic' fashion. Thus, while our definitions of 'chthonic' might give equal 'weight' to Underworld and agrarian divinities the actual labelling of purely agrarian gods and festivals as 'chthonic' by the Greeks themselves is minimal.

#### Personifications of Death: Chthonic-as-Underworld divinities

Many of the definitions we looked at in the first part of this chapter included a provision for chthonic divinities to be those who resided in the Underworld or otherwise had something to do with death. Divinities being given the epithet 'Chthonios/a' or being described as chthonic in some other way (for example, regarding provenance) represent the vast majority of instances of the term in

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<sup>68</sup> As we will see in chapters four and five.

<sup>69</sup> See chapter three.

<sup>70</sup> See the following section.

<sup>71</sup> Parker 2011: 81. See full quotation above.

<sup>72</sup> Brumfield 1981.

<sup>73</sup> SEG 615, LSCG 96.

<sup>74</sup> Hes. WD. 465.

<sup>75</sup> Soph. OC. 1606.

<sup>76</sup> Paus. 2.2.8, 5.14.8; cf. Cook 1914: 668 and n. 663.

<sup>77</sup> Isager and Skydsgaard 1992: 163.



contemporary literature as well,<sup>78</sup> and many of these cases refer to chthonic-as-Underworld gods. However, divinities who fall under the term 'chthonic' with this 'Underworld' related sense do not necessarily receive 'chthonic' epithets or descriptions, rather they are chthonic through their nature or provenance only. Two such examples are Thanatos, who might simply be referred to as personified death, and Hades.<sup>79</sup> Moving beyond ideas of what constitutes a divinity (that is, should a personification of an abstracted term be placed on the same level of divinity as a 'god'), the distinct difference between these two figures is their residence. Hades resides in the Underworld and Thanatos does not. Under a strict definition of 'chthonic'-as-Underworld gods as those who reside in the Underworld, should we then consider these non-resident death-related gods as being truly 'chthonic'?

As we shall see in chapter four, Hades the god is often indistinguishable from Hades the place, and he appears less like a god of death and more like an absent custodian of the dead. Thanatos, in its non-proper noun form describes all forms of death, natural and violent, including the death penalty or execution.<sup>80</sup> As the personification of death, Thanatos, for example, appears on the Homeric battlefield with his brother, Hypnos, to bear the fallen Sarpedon into the netherworld.<sup>81</sup> These two gods do embody separate parts of the experience of death, and are both easily categorised as chthonic gods. In this section I will be examining the figure of Thanatos along with Hermes and Charon, who are both psychopompic gods who shepherd the dead into the Underworld.

These are obviously not the only divinities who fall under the category of chthonic-as-Underworld, and do not receive a chthonic epithet.<sup>82</sup> There are, for

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<sup>78</sup> For example, Hes. *Th.* 465, 697, 767-770; Aisch. *fr.* 273a.8-10, *Ag.* 88-91, *Cho.* 1, 124b, 354-359, 399, 476, 727, *Pers.* 628, 640-642, *Supp.* 24-25; Eur. *fr.* 868.1, *IT* 1272-1273, *Hek.* 78, *Pho.* 1320-1321, *Alk.* 744-745; Soph. *El.* 110-112, *OC* 1568, 1606, *Aj.* 832; Hdt. 6.134.1, 7.153.2; Aristoph. *Th.* 101-103, *Fr.* 1126, 1138, 1145.

<sup>79</sup> I shall not discuss Hades in detail in this section, for further discussion see chapter three.

<sup>80</sup> For example, Thouk. 3.81.2, 3.57.4, 4.54.2; Hdt. 1.109.1, 3.14.6, 3.14.9, 3.119.2, 7.223.2; Xen. *Cyrop.* 1.2.14, *Hel.* 7.3.6; Plb. 6.14.6; *Dem.* 4.47; Isok. 8.50.

<sup>81</sup> Hom. *Il.* 16.454, 16.681; cf. Bakch. *fr.* 20e (Campbell).

<sup>82</sup> Hermes often receives the epithet χθόνιος but the others do not. Examples of Hermes Chthonios in literature include Aisch. *fr.* 237a *Cho.* 1, 124b, 727, *Pers.* 628; Eur. *Alk.* 744-745; Soph. *El.* 110-112, *Aj.*

example, a number of female characterisations or agents of death which should be considered as chthonic. For example, Ker and the Keres, the dooms of death, who dragged men off the battlefield and into the Underworld, who represent the black, malefic force of death, who will be discussed in chapter eight. So too the Erinyes, who are retributive goddesses and often the subject of curses or pleas for magical assistance from the netherworld.<sup>83</sup> While these feminine figures sharply impact on death-related belief, I have purposefully omitted them from this section because the Erinyes are agents of vengeance and, as we shall see in chapter seven, and the Keres are mainly concerned with fate, and so these divinities are only indirectly concerned with the process of death. In other words, they present the horror of death, a death which is to be avoided and placed on the peripheral. What I am more interested in here is a public and celebrated image of death.

Although Charon, the ferryman, is often first imagined when discussing moving the dead from the upper world into the lower one, the psychopompos *par excellent* was certainly Hermes. Traditionally a boundary crosser of all types – the god's name derives from the *herma*,<sup>84</sup> stones laid out as boundary demarcation; by the late sixth century, these *hermai* were not only considered to be demarcation stones but also guardian figures.<sup>85</sup> They were also used to denote metaphysical space, most notably in the form of grave markers.<sup>86</sup> So Hermes comes to represent 'the idea of boundary-crossing in its ritualised form, which entails both territorial and symbolic transitions.'<sup>87</sup> In the final book of the *Odyssey*, Hermes rouses the souls of the dead and leads them, gibbering, past the streams of Okeanos and into

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832; Aristoph. *Fr.* 1126, 1138, 1145. Hermes is also often referred to as chthonios on *katadesmoi* including *DT.* 18.5, 22.35, 24.20, 26.24, 29.23, 30.28, 31.22, 32.23, 35.22, 37.23, 38.2, 38.6, etc.

<sup>83</sup> For example, *DT.* 18.5, 22.35, 22.36, 24.20, 26.24, 26.25, 29.23, 29.23, 30.28, 31.32, 33.28, 35.23, etc. The Erinyes will be discussed in more detail in chapter five.

<sup>84</sup> Beekes 2010: 462; Larson 2007: 144; Baudy Konstanz 1997: 426; Furley 1996: 18-19. This etymology appears to be generally accepted.

<sup>85</sup> Larson 2007: 146.

<sup>86</sup> Burkert 1985: 158. And in other cases images of *hermai* appear on grave stele, for example *LIMC* s.v. Hermes 89-91; cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 219.

<sup>87</sup> N. Marinatos 2003: 141-142.

the Underworld.<sup>88</sup> He features in this role on the Athenian white-ground *lekythoi*,<sup>89</sup> being shown controlling the movements of souls between the upper and lower worlds.<sup>90</sup> He often appears alongside Charon<sup>91</sup> and in these circumstances is usually shown leading the deceased towards Charon's boat by the hand, wrist or upper arm.<sup>92</sup> He is sometimes also depicted with Thanatos, either with or without Hypnos,<sup>93</sup> and is here usually shown standing by the tomb waiting to take control of the deceased from Thanatos. In his guise as psychopompos, Hermes has a direct and physical relationship to the dead and this role is also represented by ritual activity in Athens. During the annual Anthesteria,<sup>94</sup> a festival to Dionysos throughout which souls of the dead were believed to roam freely about the city,<sup>95</sup> sacrifices were made to Hermes in order to ensure that he was present and well-disposed to lead the dead safely back into the Underworld after their three-days visit to the upper world.<sup>96</sup> And this fits with another of Hermes' 'chthonic' aspects, as a god who not only leads souls from one place to another but who also acts as a kind of guard, ensuring that the souls may only return to the upper world at appropriate times; for example involving visits to Nekyomanteia and during festivals like the Anthesteria, and restricting access between the two worlds.<sup>97</sup> As a messenger – the sole messenger of Hades described in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*<sup>98</sup> – he is also

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<sup>88</sup> Hom. *Od.* 24.1-14.

<sup>89</sup> The funerary *lekythoi* can be divided into two general categories: those on which we find scenes of burial or funerary rites and those which represent personifications of death, or death related divinities, most usually Charon, Hermes, Thanatos and Hypnos. cf. Kurtz and Boardman 1971: 103.

<sup>90</sup> *LIMC* s.v. Hermes 598, 606, 611c; Oakley 2004: figs. 100, 102, 103; Vermeule 1979: fig. 19; Shapiro 1993: fig. 83, 91; Fairbanks 1907: 306; Kurtz 1975: xxi.

<sup>91</sup> Oakley 2004: 139. Examples include *LIMC* s.v. Charon 5, 6, 7a, 7b, 10, 12, 22; Fairbanks 1907: 190, 191, plate VII.

<sup>92</sup> For example, *LIMC* s.v. Hermes 606; Oakley 2004: fig. 103; Fairbanks 1907: 284. Literary examples include Soph. *Aj.* 831-834; Eur. *Alk.* 743-744.

<sup>93</sup> For example, *LIMC* s.v. Hermes 593; Kurtz 1975: Plate 50.52.

<sup>94</sup> For general information on the Anthesteria see Simon 1983: 92-101; H. W. Parke 1977: 107-124; van Hoorn 1951: 19-49.

<sup>95</sup> On souls roaming around the city see Burkert 1983: 226-229, 1985: 238; Bremmer 1983: 108-123; Deubner 1966: 111-114.

<sup>96</sup> Simon 1983: 93; H. W. Parke 1977: 119; Burkert 1985: 241.

<sup>97</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 304 and n. 311; Herter 1976: 218. An example in literature can be found at Aisch. *Pers.* 628-630.

<sup>98</sup> h.Hom. *Herm.* 572-573.

responsible, in part, for ensuring that messages between the worlds are received; and this is particularly evident given the large presence of the god – usually with the epithet ‘chthonios’ on *katadesmoi*,<sup>99</sup> where the god directly has the power to carry out curses.<sup>100</sup>

One of the most important aspects of Hermes’ ability to cross into the Underworld, however, is the unique ability he has to navigate back into the living world. One prominent example of this can be seen in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, wherein Hermes effects the return of Persephone to her mother, following abduction by Hades.<sup>101</sup> She cannot find her way out alone and Hermes must be her guide. Similarly, when Herakles captures Hades’ three-headed dog, Kerberos, Hermes leads the hero home. When recounting this journey to Odysseus, Herakles directly names Hermes as being responsible for guiding him home.<sup>102</sup>

Although Hermes is portrayed in the book twenty-four of the *Odyssey* as the single psychopompos, between the sixth and fifth centuries another psychopompic figure emerged – that of Charon, the ferryman who shipped the souls of the dead across the waters and into the Underworld; an inscription from Phokis, dated from around 500<sup>103</sup> is the first extant mention of the ferryman<sup>104</sup> and reads:

χαῖρε, Χάρων· | οὐδὶς τὸ κακῶς | λέγει οὐδὲ θανόντα,  
πολὸς | ἀνθρώπων λυσάμενος | καμάτο.

Hail, Charon. No one speaks ill of you even in death,  
for you freed many men from pain.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Parker 2005b: 296; Eidinow 2007: 148. Examples include: Wünsch 1897: Nos. 79, 81, 84, 87, 88, 89, 93, 100, 102, 105, 106; Audollent 1904: Nos. 50, 52, 67, 68, 72, 73, 85, 86, 88, 105; Jordan 1985: Nos. 18, 42, 44, 75, 109, 118, 119, 120, 121, 170.

<sup>100</sup> Eidinow 2007: 149.

<sup>101</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 378-380.

<sup>102</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.625-626; cf. ps-Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.71, 2.123.

<sup>103</sup> Alexiou et al. 2002: 138; Garland 1985: 55.

<sup>104</sup> Charon is called the ‘old ferryman’ in the epic poem *Minyas*, possibly of fifth-century date. Kinkel 1877: 215. See Paus. 10.28.2; cf. Eur. *Alk.* 254; Huxley 1969: 119.

<sup>105</sup> Peek 1955: no. 1384. trans. Alexiou. cf. Garland 1985: 55.

Charon, however, would not become a figure of popular mythology until later, around halfway through the fifth century.<sup>106</sup> Where in the *Odyssey*, Hermes lead the souls past the rivers of Okeanos and into the Underworld himself, by the fifth century visual representations appear to show Hermes collecting the souls and shepherding them to the mouth of the river, where Charon took them into the netherworld.<sup>107</sup> Water itself plays a very prominent role in Greek eschatology;<sup>108</sup> mythologised symbolic death often involves a journey over, into or under the water;<sup>109</sup> the Underworld has always been characterised by its proximity to water – Odysseus, for example, is directed by Kirke to cross the ocean in order to find it;<sup>110</sup> the Orphic gold tablets advise the deceased not to drink from any spring they may encounter in the Underworld until they reach the Lake of Memory.<sup>111</sup> Water had a deeper connection to death in general, as well. This is a long-recognised connection and there are many examples of death being visualised as a leap into the ocean or a lake.<sup>112</sup> Death and burial at sea were considered to be non-burial for the purposes of gaining entry into the Underworld unless a physical tomb was still built on land for the deceased and they were offered normal funerary rites.<sup>113</sup> There was also a belief that those lost at sea would find it more difficult to locate their loved ones in the Underworld.<sup>114</sup> Crossing the water represented crossing the boundary between life and death, between one state of being and another, so the increasing popularity of a ferryman figure becoming closely involved in the soul's journey into the

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<sup>106</sup> Mirto 2012: 25.

<sup>107</sup> For example, *LIMC* s.v. Charon I.1, I.2, I.3, I.5, I.7a, I.7b, I.10, I.11, I.12, I.13, I.19, I.24, I.27, I.30, I.32, I.33a, I.36, I.37, I.40, I.41, I.42, I.43.

<sup>108</sup> See discussion of water in appendix three.

<sup>109</sup> Beaulieu 2008: 14.

<sup>110</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.639, 24.11.

<sup>111</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 29-35; Janko 1984: 91.

<sup>112</sup> Vermeule 1979: 179. cf. appendix three.

<sup>113</sup> The idea of the sea being a liminal place for both the living and the dead is represented in the response to the question of the living or the dead being greater in number, the answer comes: τοὺς οὖν πλέοντας ποῦ τίθης; ('where, then, do you place the sailors?'). Diog. Laert. 1.8.104.

<sup>114</sup> Vermeule 1979: 184-185, 188.

netherworld is understandable. By crossing the water, the dead is integrated into the Underworld, and comes under the control of Hades.

In myth, Charon expected a payment of one or two obols, and this idea is first shown in Aristophanes' *Frogs*.<sup>115</sup> This may have been a way of discerning those who truly belonged in the Underworld from those who did not. In reality, however, coins did not make up a part of grave goods, either on the person or elsewhere in the tomb, before the Hellenistic period.<sup>116</sup> Charon is shown on the funerary *lekythoi* more than he appears in any other context; he appears on around 90 examples.<sup>117</sup> In his earliest known iconographic representation, on a sixth-century black-figured vase from Attika, he is depicted as an old man surrounded by a swarm of child-sized *eidola*, one of which is trying to gain passage onto his boat. It appears, however, that his boat is already full.<sup>118</sup> The depictions on the *lekythoi* and other vases, however, do not show him as an old man but generally as a middle-aged, bearded man wearing a rustic hat.<sup>119</sup> Classical literature sometimes uses Charon as a motif of impending death; sometimes he is shown, as Oakley comments, as an 'impatient, demanding workman, intent on carrying out his duty'.<sup>120</sup> Contrary to the image of Hermes as a helper of the dead, this rendering of Charon shows a death agent who is at best uncaring and at worst callous. In most representations, however, he is shown as a calm and patient, and in one of two types – kindly Charon or stern Charon; though even 'stern' Charon does not exude callousness.<sup>121</sup>

Neither Charon nor Hermes, the two major psychopompic figures of the classical period, describes what or who death is. They do nevertheless impact sharply on our understanding of what constitutes Underworld divinities. Much more than Hades they are agents of death, and directly involved in the process of death,

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<sup>115</sup> Aristoph. *Fr.* 139-40, 269-70.

<sup>116</sup> Stevens 1991: 215, 223; Garland 1985: 23.

<sup>117</sup> Oakley 2004: 113.

<sup>118</sup> Oakley 2004: 113.

<sup>119</sup> For example *LIMC* s.v. Charon I.1, I.3, I.5, I.7a, I.7b, I.10, I.11, I.13, I.19; cf. Oakley 2004: 113.

<sup>120</sup> Oakley 2004: 125.

<sup>121</sup> Garland 1985: 56.

which carries on until the *psyche* reaches its final home in the Underworld, by facilitating the movement of these *psychai* into the Underworld. They are not custodians of the dead, and they are not personifications of death. They do not reside permanently in the Underworld but rather travel into and out of it regularly. Thus, we can broaden our definition of the chthonic gods to include Underworld related but non-resident divinities, who do not directly influence death but are nevertheless intimately involved in the experience of the deceased.

There is one personified character that may also assist in the development of an inclusive definition for Underworld-related chthonic divinities, and that is Thanatos, who is, at least in name, death itself. In the Homeric epics, Thanatos is only truly anthropomorphised on a few occasions; either when he is referred to in his absence as brother of Hypnos,<sup>122</sup> or when he appears, along with Hypnos, at the edge of the battlefield to collect the body of the slain Sarpedon.<sup>123</sup> The Homeric non-proper-noun θάνατος may be, more correctly, viewed as a non-personified, non-agent of death who merely 'represents an aspect of what happens when life stops'.<sup>124</sup> This is, then, the veil of mist that descends upon the dead, and is more usually used to qualify the activity of other death agents or non-agent death related activity. In the late sixth and early fifth century, the figure of Thanatos becomes more iconographically fixed,<sup>125</sup> and he usually appears with Hypnos. He begins to appear on Attic red-figure vases round 520 to 510, when he and Hypnos are shown carrying Sarpedon off the battlefield.<sup>126</sup> They are most often represented as warriors, indistinguishable from those around them except for their wings and, later, winged sandals.<sup>127</sup> The *lekythoi* do not only show Thanatos and Hypnos bearing heroes from

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<sup>122</sup> Hom. *Il.* 14.231, 16.672, 16.682.

<sup>123</sup> Hom. *Il.* 16.681-683.

<sup>124</sup> Vermeule 1979: 37.

<sup>125</sup> Vermeule 1979: 148.

<sup>126</sup> LIMC s.v. Thanatos 14, 15, 16, 18.

<sup>127</sup> Vernant 1991: 95.; cf. von Bothmer 1981: 63-80.

the battlefield, but ordinary men as well and, by the end of the fifth century, women are also being depicted as being carried off by Thanatos and Hypnos.<sup>128</sup>

As a death-agent Thanatos does not directly kill, he 'accepted the dead',<sup>129</sup> but he did then keep them forever.<sup>130</sup> Therefore, although linguistically *thanatos* represents death in all its forms, the personified Thanatos does not characterise all these multifarious forms. Although, in Euripides' *Alkestis* Apollo describes Thanatos as being hateful to mankind and loathed by the gods (ἐχθρούς γε θνητοῖς καὶ θεοῖς στυγούμενους).<sup>131</sup> In the play, he is described as carrying a sword with which he would cut off a lock of hair from those fated to die.<sup>132</sup> Hair was sometimes dedicated to the deceased,<sup>133</sup> and locks of hair also held a ritual place in rites of passage.<sup>134</sup> He also points out that he has rights and honours proportionate to the youth of his victim,<sup>135</sup> but that his duty is to kill whoever needs killing,<sup>136</sup> and that he cannot act independently.

## Conclusion

We cannot simply take ritual practice as the major element in deciding upon a 'chthonic' status. This is true even in cases where we are discussing the rituals themselves, as the nature of the divinity (or, more accurately, the perceived nature of the divinity) will certainly influence the individual performers of a ritual. Likewise, as we have superficially seen here and will see in more detail within this thesis, a categorical set of 'chthonic' indicators for ritual practices cannot be established. There are some elements which may appear common in many so-called 'chthonic' practices, such as wineless libation, black or dark sacrificial victims, or night-time

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<sup>128</sup> Vermeule 1979: 150.

<sup>129</sup> Vermeule 1979: 145.

<sup>130</sup> Hes. *Th.* 764-766.

<sup>131</sup> Eur. *Alk.* 62.

<sup>132</sup> Eur. *Alk.* 74-75.

<sup>133</sup> For example at Aisch. *Ag.* 6-7.

<sup>134</sup> Leitao 2003; cf. Parker 2005a: 210; Versnel 1993: 314, 317.

<sup>135</sup> Eur. *Alk.* 55.

<sup>136</sup> Eur. *Alk.* 49.



worship, but the presence of one or more of these elements does not automatically render a ritual as 'chthonic.' This is particularly true in cases where the divinity in whose honour the ritual is being held is not an Underworld or agrarian god (in the strictest sense of the term 'chthonic') or does not have the epithet Chthonios/a, or a similarly Underworld themed epithet. One of these two factors (that is, being either an Underworld/agrarian god or having an Underworld-themed epithet) must be present for a divinity to be considered 'chthonic'. Simply having 'alternative' ritual practices cannot indicate chthonism. It might be more pertinent to label 'chthonic' ritual practices as being 'cautious' rituals (rather than, for instance, apotropaic, expelling or 'negatively themed' rituals).<sup>137</sup>

Bremmer, discussing ritual practices specifically, summed up his thoughts on the distinction between the Olympic and chthonic by noting that 'it would be fruitful as well to think of the distinction between so-called Olympian and chthonian not as a polar opposition but as the two *idealtypische* ends of a cultic spectrum that is as rich as Greek civilisation itself'.<sup>138</sup> That 'chthonism' itself might be fluid certainly accounts for the numerous cases in which we find divinities (or, for that matter, specific ritual practices) who do not fit neatly into either the 'chthonic' or 'ouranic' categories.

I am inclined to give significantly more weight to divinities and practices which are directly related to the Underworld, rather than give an equal weighting to wholly-agrarian 'chthonic' divinities. In the vast majority of cases agrarian 'chthonic' gods still maintain some connection to the Underworld. In most cases it is appropriate to create clearly delineated categories between chthonic and ouranic divinities, even though in some cases the categorisation might only affect one aspect of a divinity. Hermes Chthonios, for example, is a clearly distinguishable chthonic god, so too Hermes Psychopompos. Hermes Enagonios ('of the games'),<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Scullion in discussion in Bremmer 2005: 164.

<sup>138</sup> Bremmer 2005: 163.

<sup>139</sup> See, for example, *JG* II<sup>2</sup> 3023.

for example, has no chthonic function, but this fact does not change the chthonic function of Hermes Psychopompos. Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, I use the term chthonic with an overriding Underworld or death-related implication, even in cases where agricultural elements of ritual or divinities are expressed.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> As previously stated, I have purposefully not included the dead or heroes in this discussion as they do not feature in this thesis.

### 3: Hades, Lord of the Dead?

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Throughout the corpus of Greek literature dealing with, and referring to, the Underworld, there is one shadowy figure who is presented as having a near continuous inhabitation in and rulership over it. Hades, Kronos' son and brother of Zeus and Poseidon, is often described as being the overlord of the dead, although he has little interaction with the deceased who fall under his command. It is Persephone, Hades' abductee-wife, who has a much greater direct contact with the dead. This may be because she had experienced the journey from the upper world into the netherworld herself, and therefore has something of an empathetic relationship with the deceased who enter her realm. This chapter will first examine Hades' characterisations and cultic personae from Homeric literature through the archaic and early classical periods. The aim will be to discover to what extent and in what contexts Hades was regarded as the Lord of the Underworld, and whether cultic practices reflect this aspect of the god. As we shall explore below, Hades does not regularly appear as the recipient of cultic worship, and we may need to read the god as a mythic figure more than a cultic god. The second section of this chapter will explore aspects of Hades' personality, both mythic and cultic, to assess the validity of the claim that he is the ruler of the Underworld. I shall also undertake a closer examination of the connections between Hades and the god Plouton, specifically within Eleusinian cult, in order to demonstrate that the two gods retained separate aspectual identities. That is, that even in later literature in which the names 'Hades' and 'Plouton' can appear interchangeable, there was still a firm and identifiable distinction between the ambiguous and shady Underworld lord and the Eleusinian, agrarian god.

### Hades in Modern Scholarship

Hades had received little individual treatment in modern scholarship, featuring most prominently as the protagonist in Burton's 'Hades: Cornucopiae, Fertility and Death',<sup>1</sup> in which the iconographic persona of the god is investigated in the context of his agrarian attributes. Most usually, treatments of Hades refer to the Underworld rather than the god, and thus we have works such as Albinus' eschatologically themed study *The House of Hades: Studies in Ancient Greek Eschatology*,<sup>2</sup> and Dova's *Greek Heroes In and Out of Hades*,<sup>3</sup> or Sommerstein's 'Why Hades Was Crammed With Persians'.<sup>4</sup>

Farnell devotes eight pages to the god, briefly detailing his cult in Elis, which will be discussed below, and for the most part dealing with a discussion of where Hades himself came from.<sup>5</sup> Farnell concludes that the figure of Hades developed out of the need for a counterpart to Zeus<sup>6</sup> – a gloomy and 'dead' god to be the counterpoint to the shining, 'living' god. In *Greek Religion*,<sup>7</sup> Burkert speaks mainly of Hades in the context of the Persephone abduction narrative, or as the Underworld itself, rather than the god who inhabits it. Burkert's is a typical example of a treatment of Hades. For a further example, Guthrie's *The Greeks and Their Gods* includes, in its index, 'Hades, descent into', before '(the god)'.<sup>8</sup> Guthrie does not even treat the god in the chapter on 'The Chthonioi', merely saying that 'Zeus *Katachthonios* ('beneath the earth') is once mentioned in the *Iliad* as the husband of Persephone, as it is a name for Hades or Pluto, the brother of the Olympian, as in the passage of Aeschylus'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Burton 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Albinus 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Dova 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Sommerstein 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Farnell 1907: 280-288.

<sup>6</sup> Farnell 1907: 284-285.

<sup>7</sup> Burkert 1985.

<sup>8</sup> Guthrie 1955: 379.

<sup>9</sup> Guthrie 1955: 217.

## Hades in Homer and Hesiod

Within the Homeric epics Αἴδης as an individual god is barely distinguished from the Underworld as a locality and, in some cases, it is difficult to differentiate between the god and the place even through literary context. For example, a reference to the 'gates of Hades' may either refer to the gates that belong to the god or the gates which lead into the location.<sup>10</sup> Each time this ambiguous phrase is used in Homer, the name appears in the Homeric genitive, Αἰδαο. The use of the genitive in this way is, Clarke argues, 'odd but not unparalleled in our author: compare Διὸς ἔνδον...<sup>11</sup> for "inside the house of Zeus," εἰς Αἰγύπτιοι, διπετέος ποταμοῖο...<sup>12</sup> for "into the river..." and ἐς πατρός...<sup>13</sup> for "to the father's house"'.<sup>14</sup> Thus, we can envision the place and the god as originally being a single named entity from which the personified figure of Hades slowly stepped forward,<sup>15</sup> and Hades' name can be considered as deriving directly from the name of the Underworld as a location for this reason.<sup>16</sup>

According to Homer, Hades became ruler over the Underworld when he ἔλαχε ζόφον ἡερόεντα ('drew the gloomy darkness')<sup>17</sup> in the ballot with brothers Zeus and Poseidon for portions of the earth to govern. Hades is referred to as Αἰδωνεύς ('Aidoneus') twice in Homer's *Iliad*,<sup>18</sup> four times in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*,<sup>19</sup> once in Hesiod's *Theogony*,<sup>20</sup> and twice in the extant works of Aeschylus.<sup>21</sup> The only clear differential between 'Hades' and 'Aidoneus' is the more concrete characterisation of the latter, where the former appears ambiguously in most

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<sup>10</sup> Hom. *Il.* 5.646; 9.312; 23.71; *Od.* 14.156. See also Hom. *Il.* 6.487; 7.330; 11.55; 16.856; 22.213, 362; 23.76, 244.

<sup>11</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.13.

<sup>12</sup> Hom. *Od.* 4.581.

<sup>13</sup> Hom. *Od.* 2.195.

<sup>14</sup> Clarke 1999: 157 n. 151; Janda 2000: 69-70. Also, see below for further discussion.

<sup>15</sup> M.P Nilsson 1967: 455.

<sup>16</sup> Bremmer 2002: 4.

<sup>17</sup> Hom. *Il.* 15.187-191 (quoted 191); cf. h.Hom. *Dem.* 84-87; Pl. *Gorg.* 523a.

<sup>18</sup> Hom. *Il.* 5.190, 20.61.

<sup>19</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 2, 84, 358, 377.

<sup>20</sup> Hes. *Th.* 913.

<sup>21</sup> Aisch. *Pers.* 650; *Emp. Fr.* 6.3.

circumstances in which he is named. In each circumstance in which he is named 'Aidoneus' it is clear that he is meant to be considered as the god and there is no ambiguity in his presence; he is presented as a clearly personified figure. In one instance Homer describes an incident in which: ἔδεισεν δ' ὑπένερθεν ἄναξ ἐνέρων Αἰδωνεύς ('Aidoneus, lord of shades, was fearful in the world below')<sup>22</sup> as Poseidon shook the earth. This episode provides one of the most complete characterisations that Homer gives of Hades, demonstrating an aspect of the god which shows him experiencing an emotion familiar and relatable to human readers.

That Hades should be described as being in fear demonstrates a human-like fallibility being read into him by the author. Fear is an emotion that is much attested in relation to the gods, but it is most usually mortal fear of the gods. People use the gods to alleviate fears and are spurred on to act well by fear of divine retribution; the sometimes fickle nature of the Greek gods only enhances the role that fear plays. On this, Chaniotis comments that 'as it was believed to be exclusively within a god's discretion to punish or forgive, to listen to a prayer or to ignore it, to come when invited or to stay away, the emotions of the mortal who approached a god were fear and hope'.<sup>23</sup> This was recognised even in the classical period, when, according to Sextus Empiricus, fear was understood as a primary motivation for religion by the sophist Kritias.<sup>24</sup> This, however, deals with fear being a religious motivator for mortals, not for gods. This passage helps to create an alignment between Hades and the mortal world. The only other explicit case of a god being fearful in the poem is Hera, who fears Zeus' anger.<sup>25</sup> Although all the gods have at least some human characteristics, Hades' fear of Poseidon's earth-shaking shows the god being fearful of natural disaster – something that gods would have no need to fear in

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<sup>22</sup> Hom. *Il.* 20.61.

<sup>23</sup> Chaniotis 2012: 205.

<sup>24</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematician* 9.54. The other interesting concept presented in this passage, specifically in relation to death beliefs, is the idea that the gods will reward good behaviour and punish bad behaviour. In terms of afterlife-related beliefs, this is not a concept that appears in early literature except in extreme cases in which the deceased has severely offended the divinity involved.

<sup>25</sup> Hom. *Il.* 1.568.

ordinary circumstances. Therefore this fear shows Hades as more human than other gods.

Hades is also presented as the ruler of the Underworld by the use of the name 'underground Zeus'<sup>26</sup> in early literature. For example, on one occasion in Homer he is Ζεύς καταχθόνιος ('underground Zeus'),<sup>27</sup> and he is called 'Zeus' in a number of other circumstances, including references to being the Ζεύς ἄλλος ('other Zeus')<sup>28</sup> and κατὰ χθονὸς Διὸς νεκρῶν σωτῆρος, ('underground Zeus, protector of the dead'), both in Aischylos.<sup>29</sup> In Homer's *Odyssey*, Hades is presented in a significantly less concrete fashion than in the *Iliad* and, while references to Αἴδαο δόμος may imply the presence of the god, it is his wife, Persephone, who takes the leading role in governing the dead.<sup>30</sup> Hades is never called Aidoneus in the *Odyssey*, which reinforces the concept that this is the version of the god who is has a corporeal presence, rather than being an ambiguous place-god. Hesiod, on the other hand, explicitly refers to ἰφθιμόν τ' Αἴδην, ὃς ὑπὸ χθονὶ δώματα ναίει νηλεὲς ἦτορ ἔχων ('mighty Hades, who resides in palaces beneath the earth and has a pitiless heart').<sup>31</sup> Although he does not emphasise the point, Hesiod openly and clearly presents Hades as ἐνέροισι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσω, ('lord over the dead below').<sup>32</sup> That this is not specifically highlighted in the text is irrelevant, and points merely to a foregone conclusion in the author's eyes; it is not important enough to warrant mention. In Hesiod's cosmology, therefore, there is no doubt

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<sup>26</sup> There are some guises of Zeus that have an Underworld related nature, including Zeus Chthonios, although these gods are mostly agrarian in nature. 'Chthonic Zeus' is a well-established epithet for Hades, just as 'sea-dwelling Zeus' is an adjectival name for Poseidon. This should not indicate that 'Zeus Chthonios' is always an epithet for Hades, as this form of Zeus has agrarian attributes and takes the epithet from such connotations. cf. Schleiser 1997: 1187.

<sup>27</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.457.

<sup>28</sup> Aisch. *Hik.* 231.

<sup>29</sup> Aisch. *Ag.* 1386-1387. cf. Calame 2008: 242, 245.

<sup>30</sup> Hom. *Od.* 4.834, 10.175, 10.491, 10.564, 11.69, 11.164, 11.211, 11.277, 11.425, 11.625, 12.21, 14.208, 15.350, 20.208, 24.204, 24.264. Persephone's role as queen of the Underworld will be discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>31</sup> Hes. *Th.* 455-456.

<sup>32</sup> Hes. *Th.* 851.

that Hades is the indisputable ruler of the Underworld, and he is not confused with, or at least not explicitly assimilated to, the locality of the Underworld.

On a number of other occasions, Hades is called ἰφθιμός ('mighty'), alongside that assertion that he had a νηλεὲς ἦτορ ('ruthless heart').<sup>33</sup> Hesiod paints a picture of a god who is more defined than his Homeric – or at least *Iliadic* – counterpart and who is merciless, where the Homeric god, even when he is given the more concretised name Aidoneus, is merely ambiguous. The explanation, however, may simply lie in a difference of genre; Homer's narrative is mortal-focused, and, while some gods are concretely defined, this only occurs in the context of the mortal world, when and where they are needed to enhance or move the action forward. This is true even when the gods are shown on Olympus: their actions are explicitly designed to impact the mortal world. Hesiod's narrative, on the other hand, is inherently driven by a focus on the gods and their origin stories – at least those backstories which are presented in his works<sup>34</sup> – creating a work in which normally non-personified gods are anthropomorphised.

#### Hades, Plouton, Ploutos and Theos

It is normally easy to distinguish between Hades and Plouton in visual representations. Their frequent iconographical similarities extend only so far as to cover age: both are represented as mature, bearded, and often with white hair. Plouton's main iconographical attribute is the sceptre, although the presence of an overflowing cornucopia can also sometimes identify him. However, the cornucopia is most often associated with the youthful Ploutos,<sup>35</sup> rather than Plouton. Plouton is most usually shown standing, and usually appears fully clothed. He may appear alone, with either Demeter or Kore, or both together.<sup>36</sup> Plouton is also connected

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<sup>33</sup> Hes. *Th.* 768, 774.

<sup>34</sup> There are also numerous occasions in which Hesiod himself presents multiple origin stories for a single divinity. We shall see a prominent example of this, involving the Moirai, in chapter seven.

<sup>35</sup> Ploutos will be discussed in more detail below.

<sup>36</sup> For example, *LIMC* s.v Hades 39, whom Clinton identifies as Plouton. See Clinton 1992: 109.



with the two goddesses in cult, for example at the mid-winter fertility festival in Eleusis, the Haloa, held in Poseideon (December/January).<sup>37</sup>

Conversely, Hades is alternatively represented as standing, seated, or lying. He is frequently bare-chested and Clinton identifies that he 'often has a sceptre, does not carry agrarian attributes, such as grain stalks or cornucopia; the horn he sometimes holds is empty and serves as a drinking horn'.<sup>38</sup> Hades is occasionally depicted with a sceptre, which is probably more closely associated to the staff carried by Hermes in his guise as *psychopompos*, rather than any agrarian aspect associated with Plouton.<sup>39</sup> He often only appears with a Persephone-like figure.

However, the apparently clear delineation between the two gods in ancient art does not mean that identification is simple, particularly in circumstances where there are only fragmentary remains of artefacts. This is particularly true in the case of cult items. In these cases recipients are often uncertain and can only be ascertained through context of deposition or by inscriptional evidence, which may not occur. We must also bear in mind that there are cases in which a figure does not conform to a particular type. For example, a figure lying on a couch with Persephone, half clothed and holding a cornucopia.<sup>40</sup> The figure could represent either Plouton or Hades from the description of attributes given above. Here, context is not clear and there can be no definitive identification of one god or the other. What this shows is that the two gods may appear in analogous contexts and with similar attributes. This is true even in cases, as in the example above, where

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<sup>37</sup> Brumfield 1981: 108.

<sup>38</sup> Clinton 1992: 105.

<sup>39</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 29-35; *LIMC* s.v Hades 22, 24, 121, 137, 140, 146, 147, 148, 149, 151, 156, 161, 162. Pindar comments that Hades does use the staff in a psychopompic fashion to lead the souls of the dead into the Underworld. However, it is likely that the staff itself was representative of the journey of the *psyche* into Hades' domain. There are quite a few representations of Hades bearing the staff/sceptre in scenes which are set in the Underworld (for example, *LIMC* s.v Hades 121, 137, 140, 146, 147, 148, 161). In such representations the staff is clearly not being used to usher the dead into the Underworld, possibly indicating that the staff/sceptre had become appropriated into iconographic representations of Hades for non-psychopompic purposes, either through the association to the psychopompic staff, or through association with Plouton.

<sup>40</sup> See *LIMC* s.v. Hades 44.

they are indistinguishable from one another without taking wider context into account. There are, however, a number of clear distinctions in artistic representations, both in literature and in art, and this is generally sufficient to identify which god is being depicted. Therefore, even though they are associated with one another in later literature and art, we should not confuse them as being two faces of one divinity in the archaic or classical periods. Rather, because they represent related aspects (that is, because the 'chthonic' can refer both to the 'Underworld' and to the 'underground' in an agricultural context), had similar iconographic attributes, and were each paired with a Persephonean figure, they were often associated with one another. Originally – and throughout our time frame – two separate gods, they did not become one god until significantly later, and they are still for the most part distinguishable from one another.

Through his developing connection to Plouton, Hades enjoyed an additional connotation of abundance and plenty, along with an increased belief that he was a good and noble god.<sup>41</sup> The belief that wealth could be sent up from below the earth arose in connection to the title Ploutos,<sup>42</sup> which has a root meaning of 'wealth'.<sup>43</sup> Over time, this association gave representations of Hades an increased agrarian aspect, although this may also have initially been formed by an increase in narratives involving marriage to Persephone/Kore. With her obvious agrarian and fertility associations and connection to Demeter, it seems more likely that this connection was perpetuated in the most part by the association with the 'wealth' of Plouton. There is also a general consensus in the various mythic narratives, both literary and iconographic, that Hades is tied to Persephone through marriage, and this is true both in representations of the pair as rulers of the Underworld and in circumstances where Persephone takes on no rulership role, such as in the Homeric *Hymn to*

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<sup>41</sup> Pl. *Phaedo*. 80d.

<sup>42</sup> For further discussion of Ploutos see below.

<sup>43</sup> Pl. *Crat.* 403a.

*Demeter*.<sup>44</sup> Persephone appears in Homer with none of the aspects of a goddess of fertility with which she is associated in many cultic contexts, particularly those in which she is associated with Demeter. Aside from this, by virtue of being Demeter's daughter Persephone would have been understood to have some connection to fertility. She is, for instance, shown picking flowers in the opening of the Homeric hymn. This is an aspect well associated with her abduction,<sup>45</sup> and this may have been understood as a connection to the fertility of the flowers, and her own sexual maturity. Because of the association between Hades and Persephone, the god's reputation as an agricultural divinity may have increased through association with his wife.

Along with the mythic connections between Hades and agrarian fertility, we must also remember that Hades' primary role is as an underground, 'chthonic' god. This fact alone would have given Hades his own link with agricultural practices through the act of burying seeds in the earth, in the same way that bodies were interred into the ground. Farmers bury their seeds in order to create life; this is true both of the immediate life of the crop and the life sustained by the harvest. This is even directly referred to in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, where, we are told, men σπέρμ' ὑπὸ γῆς κρύπτουσιν ('hide seeds beneath the earth').<sup>46</sup> The harvest provides wealth and is a sign of public fertility. There is, therefore, a link formed between death – more specifically burial – and agrarian plenty.

Along with this increased agrarian association, a change in vocabulary describing the dead occurs. They are no longer the weak, feeble, and ineffectual beings portrayed in Homer, but are instead described as being blessed.<sup>47</sup> For example, the *Odyssey* describes Odysseus entreating the νεκύων ἀμειννὰ κάρηνα

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<sup>44</sup> This, however, does not necessarily work in the opposite direction, where Persephone can be represented as Queen of the Underworld without mention of Hades, such as in Pindar's poetry. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

<sup>45</sup> For example, and as we will see in greater detail in the next chapter, the Lokrian Pinakes depict Persephone in the moments after abduction as well as youth acting out mock abductions in imitation of Persephone and Hades. These often show Persephone or the girl holding flowers.

<sup>46</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 353; cf. 305-311, 332-333.

<sup>47</sup> Bremmer 2002: 6.

(‘feeble heads of the dead’).<sup>48</sup> By the time of Aristophanes’ *Frogs*, the dead, or at least the initiates of the Mysteries who are depicted in the comedy, are described as being θιάσους εὐδαίμονας ἀνδρῶν γυναικῶν (‘happy chorus of men and women’).<sup>49</sup> Similarly, attitudes towards the dead changed as the ‘familiar, hateful rather than frightening’<sup>50</sup> death of eighth-century mentality – something akin to Airès’ ‘Tamed Death’<sup>51</sup> – gave way to a conception of death that was categorised by avoidance. Sourvinou-Inwood comments, on this change, that:

Clearly, an eternity as a witless senseless ghost was not, to an early Greek, a more frightening prospect, likely to generate more anxiety, than an eternity as a lively shade. After all, the former belief is a way of visualising and articulating the notions ‘cessation of life’ and ‘continuing survival’ in a peaceful image of the unseeable existence after death akin to ‘they are sleeping’.<sup>52</sup>

This change, from the peaceful but witless dead to active and ‘lively’ shades, also signals a change in attitude towards Hades, particularly as a location.

Ploutos is the only Eleusinian god who does not consistently appear fully clothed.<sup>53</sup> Ploutos is a boy of varying age, being depicted from infancy to early adolescence,<sup>54</sup> and as such there is no issue in distinguishing between Ploutos and Hades or Plouton. Ploutos and Plouton, both appearing in Eleusinian iconography and myth, have some shared iconographical attributes. For instance, they both often appear with Kore and Demeter, and are both often shown with the cornucopia, although Ploutos is sometimes represented as being *inside* the cornucopia.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.29; cf. 10.521, 10.536, 11.49. cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 18.

<sup>49</sup> Aristoph. *Fr.* 156-157.

<sup>50</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 17.

<sup>51</sup> See the Introduction for more on this.

<sup>52</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 18.

<sup>53</sup> Clinton 1992: 49.

<sup>54</sup> Clinton 1992: 50.

<sup>55</sup> Clinton 1992: 50.

The *Theogony* tells us that Ploutos is the son of Demeter,<sup>56</sup> and this narrative may be carried through into Eleusinian iconography. For example, the youth in the much-contested 'Eleusinian Relief'<sup>57</sup> may be Ploutos. The relief shows the two goddesses, Demeter and Kore, flanking a youth who appears to be around eleven or twelve years in age. The youth is often identified as Triptolemos,<sup>58</sup> or as an initiate or worshiper, but Clinton suggests that the boy may be Ploutos based on similar iconographical representations of the three gods.<sup>59</sup> However, there can be no definitive identification of the god-child.

The god of the Underworld in Eleusinian cult is called Theos.<sup>60</sup> This (unnamed) god is not the consort of Kore, for that is Plouton, but is rather the partner of Thea. Plouton and Theos appear together in iconographic representations at Eleusis, the most striking example being the 'Lakrateides Relief'.<sup>61</sup> Theos has, generally, a closer iconographic resemblance to Hades than to Plouton, but this does not designate the gods as the same. Theos and Thea were originally identified as Hades and Persephone by Nilsson.<sup>62</sup>

#### Hades' Role in Greek Eschatology

Like several other death-related divinities Hades does not feature directly in physical death-related ritual activity. He is not invoked in funerary or burial rites, nor is he the subject of prayers or offerings during festivals that honour the deceased and other Underworld dwellers. He also does not appear to have a prominently eschatological function. He is, for example, generally not given the duty of judging or punishing the dead. Only Aischylos assigns this role to the Underworld god. For instance, in the *Eumenides* the chorus comments μέγας γὰρ Ἄιδης ἐστὶν εὖθυος

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<sup>56</sup> Hes. *Th.* 969.

<sup>57</sup> Clinton 1992: 158 fig. 151.

<sup>58</sup> *LIMC* s.v. Demeter 375; Travlos 1988: 145 fig. 174; Bowden 2010: 46 fig. 28.

<sup>59</sup> Clinton 1992: 50.

<sup>60</sup> Clinton 1992: 114-115.

<sup>61</sup> Clinton 1992: 114.

<sup>62</sup> M. P. Nilsson 1935: 102, 112-113.

βροτῶν ἔνερθε χθονός, δελτογάφω δὲ ἔπωπᾶ φρενί ('For mighty Hades is the judge of mortals beneath the earth, and he observes all things and records them in his mind').<sup>63</sup> More than any other, peripheral function, he is presented in the capacity of custodian of the dead.<sup>64</sup> This involves ensuring that the deceased in his charge, and the living, remain in their proper places. So, although he rules over the dead themselves, Hades does not have any direct control over death or the fate of men's deaths.<sup>65</sup>

Given that Hades is most usually presented with custodianship of the dead as his major function, the general belief<sup>66</sup> would have been that he could not influence either the time when men are fated to die or their actions as shades in the Underworld. Therefore, Hades is a god who functions in a different manner from other gods. Ouranic deities exist, in part, so that mortals can worship them. Many chthonic gods (if we imagine that a simple 'black and white' distinction can be made between the two categories), similarly, exist to receive worship. Or, more accurately, are constructed to receive worship and, therefore, satisfy something within the worshiper themselves. Whether the divinity does or does not *actually* exist is irrelevant to this process. If the worshiper believes that the divinity exists, then that divinity does exist for that specific worshiper at that specific time. Living men do not, for the most part, need to worship Hades because the god cannot reciprocate their own sacrificial giving in any meaningful or tangible way. Similarly, the dead do not worship Hades as they have no need to ask favour of the god who rules over them; they have completed their assigned life and have died at the fated time.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* 273-5; cf. *Hik.* 228-31.

<sup>64</sup> For example at Aisch. *Cho.* 358-359, *PB* 152-154, *Supp.* 156-159,

<sup>65</sup> In fact, aside from the Moirai whose specific role it is to measure men's fates, and possibly the Keres, none of the gods have control over death or the fate of death. This can be illustrated very clearly by Book twenty-two of the *Iliad* where Zeus weighs the fates of Hektor and Achilles' deaths but cannot influence them in any way; Hom. *Il.* 22.208-213. This will be discussed in chapter seven below.

<sup>66</sup> See chapter one for discussion of 'belief' in Greek religion.

<sup>67</sup> However, there is a case to be made for the dead worshipping Persephone, in the context of the Orphic gold lamellae. This will be discussed in detail below.

According to early representations, the dead were witless shades who did not have the ability to act as they did whilst alive.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, not only would they not need the comfort provided by religious activity, they may very well actually be unable to undertake any activity of a ritual nature. The dead, then, are subjects of Hades in the way that citizens are subject to kings and lords, and they maintain a certain amount of individual autonomy. Thus, Hades truly is the 'Lord' of the dead, rather than a god of death. Even if we consider the sole purpose of mystery initiation to be blessings in the afterlife,<sup>69</sup> this does not entail any kind of religious devotion in the afterlife – there is no mention of continued religious practice and scenes of the dead certainly do not show them taking part in such ritual practices.

#### Hades in Greek cult(s)?

The close association of Hades and Plouton may have initially gained popularity and strength because of a public desire for a god who was not 'absent', even figuratively so. The etymological root of Hades' name points to a meaning of 'unseen one'<sup>70</sup> or 'the invisible',<sup>71</sup> so the god was also unseeable in cult.<sup>72</sup> We will, for instance, shortly see an example of a sanctuary that did not allow admittance by the general citizenry, making the god unseeable both in name and as a figure of worship. Although Hades is not the only god who may be invisible to mortals, since many of the ouranic

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<sup>68</sup> This is most clearly shown by the repeated phrase νεκύων ἀμενηνὰ κάρηνα ('feeble heads of the dead'), which occurs four times in the *Odyssey*: 10.521, 536; 11.29, 49.

<sup>69</sup> For example, the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* (481-482) asserts that: ὅς δ' ἀτελὴς ἱερῶν, ὅς τ' ἄμμορος, οὐ ποθ' ὁμοίων, αἴσαν ἔχει φθιμῆνος περ ὑπὸ ζόφῳ εὐρώεντι. ('The uninitiated in the rites, one without part in them, never enjoys a similar portion of benefits, blessings, whatever'). Similarly, Aristophanes' *Frogs* depicts initiates separated from the uninitiated in the Underworld. Eschatological basis for mystery religion appears to be something of an unwritten understanding between scholars; for example in Albinus (2000), where the simple inclusion of the Mysteries into this study of Greek eschatology implies a strong connection. I suspect that any benefit an initiate hopes to obtain relates to forging a positive (and profitable) relationship with the divinity in question, and they would be hoping that this relationship would serve them in life as in death. See also Bowden 2010: 47-48.

<sup>70</sup> Farnell 1907: 282; Bremmer 2002: 4.

<sup>71</sup> Beekes 1998: 18, 2010: 34; Kerényi 1974: 230.

<sup>72</sup> It should also be noted that it is possible that, rather than being 'the invisible' or 'the unseeable', Ἀΐδης may instead refer to the god being the lord of the unseen. cf. Clarke 1999: 167 n. 118.

gods appear, at various times, invisible and are often invisible in cult as well. The difference between these gods and Hades is that, in their literary or iconographical renderings, they are presented as making themselves purposely invisible whereas Hades is always invisible – or rather, unseeable – to mortals. That is to say that he it is not that he is imperceptible, but rather that under certainly conditions, namely being alive, he is withdrawn from sight or concealed from the worshiper. He remains in the Underworld, a place that cannot be accessed by ordinary living mortals.<sup>73</sup> The hazy rendering that Hades has traditionally received ‘befits the god who rules over the unseeable’,<sup>74</sup> and who is himself unseen. His ambiguous characterisation in the *Iliad* and his near-absence from the *Odyssey* would have affected later understandings and beliefs about the god, particularly as Homer’s texts became more widely known across the Greek world.

Hades has, however, an increased presence in lyric poetry although once again we find that references to Hades are usually, directly or indirectly, mentions of the Underworld as a place, or it ambiguous even though context whether the reference is to the god (or, indeed, we cannot know whether the reference is to the god or the place because of manuscript damage).<sup>75</sup> For example, Anacreon comments that Ἀΐδew γάρ ἐστι δεινὸς μυχός, ἀργαλὴ δ’ ἐς αὐτὸν κάτοδος (‘the depth of Hades is awful, and the road down to it is grievous’),<sup>76</sup> which clearly relates to Hades the location, rather than the god. There are two fragments of Stesichorus that most likely reference Hades the god, rather than the Underworld, one of which says 1 ]αξ. Ἀιδόσδε νιν                      2 θ]εὸν ἄμβροτον (...him to the house of Hades...

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<sup>73</sup> Beekes 1998: 18-19.

<sup>74</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 21. For a further discussion on the origin of this meaning in Homer see Clarke 1999: 167 n. 118.

<sup>75</sup> For example, Stesichorus *fr.* S39 (Campbell) = P.Oxy. 2617 *fr.* 29, which reads:

1 ο]ύκ. Ἀιδος οὐδ[                      3 ]ρες ἡλύθον ε .[  
4 εὐρ]υχορ[

...not (of?) Hades nor... (they) came... (spacious?) (trans. Campbell)

<sup>76</sup> Anacreon, *fr.* 395 (Campbell). cf. Bakchylides 5.61.



immortal god...<sup>77</sup> Similarly, a fragment from Athenaeus' *Scholars at Dinner* mentions a ὕμνος Ἄιδου ('hymn for Hades').<sup>78</sup>

Hades' reputation as an 'unseeable' god may have been further perpetuated by his mythic 'cap of invisibility', which was first attested in Homer when Athena uses it to hide herself from Ares.<sup>79</sup> According to pseudo-Apollodoros, the Kyklopes gave the cap to Plouton, a name that was used in the *Bibliotheka* to denote the god of the Underworld,<sup>80</sup> at the same time that he gave Zeus the thunderbolt and Poseidon the trident. The cap is also mentioned in Hesiod where, rather than making the wearer invisible, it cloaks him with the νυκτὸς ζόφον αἰνὸν ('awful gloom of night').<sup>81</sup> Darkness and night are associated with death in Homer as well, where dying heroes are described as having night or darkness descend upon them or cover their eyes,<sup>82</sup> and this description is enough to indicate that the hero is dead.<sup>83</sup> The contrast between dark and light can be rendered as juxtaposition between living and death; the living man sees the light whereas the dead are shrouded in darkness. Darkness itself forms a natural attribute of invisibility.<sup>84</sup> The Underworld, and by association the god who governs it, is also shrouded in darkness, and the dead are, similarly, rendered invisible to the living until they are brought out into the light. The absence of light and seeing can be directly linked to the invisible, and so these two caps – Homer and Hesiod's – are the same.

With the literary and iconographical dissonance between Hades and Plouton it may, in fact, seem that any cultic worship directed at Hades is actually directed towards Plouton, and that Hades is solely a god of mythology – and even then

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<sup>77</sup> Stesichorus *fr.* 222B.37 (Campbell) = P.Oxy 3876 (suppl. ed. pr., M.W. Haslam) trans. Campbell. cf. Stesichorus *fr.* 232 (Campbell) = Plut. *De E* 394b.

<sup>78</sup> Athen. 2.44d (l 103 Kaibel) *fr.* 3 (Campbell).

<sup>79</sup> Hom. *Il.* 5.8.44-845.

<sup>80</sup> ps-Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.2.1. Showing that, by this late stage, the two had, at least in some circumstances, become interchangeable.

<sup>81</sup> Hes. *Sh.* 227.

<sup>82</sup> For example, τὸν δὲ κατ' ὀφθαλμῶν ἐρεβεννὴ νύξ ἐκάλυψε ('and down on his eyes came the darkness of night'). (Hom. *Il.* 5.659. trans. Murray).

<sup>83</sup> Morrison 1999: 136.

<sup>84</sup> Pease 1942: 5.

barely so – and does not exist in religious undertakings in the world. After all, he is, as Burton describes, ‘notoriously the god who receives no cult’.<sup>85</sup> Funerary rituals, grave markers and goods, or calls for magical assistance to the Underworld rarely – if ever – include references to him, and there is no epigraphical record of Hades until the fourth century.<sup>86</sup> Likewise, no temples or altars dedicated to the god have been found. It does not necessarily follow, however, that ‘Hades had no generally recognised cult’.<sup>87</sup> Although there are a number of cults in which Hades plays a direct role, it may be that the majority of Hades’ long-lasting cultic participation occurs only through his relationship to other divinities, usually those associated in some way with the Underworld.

There are several sanctuaries that contain cultic dedications to the god of the Underworld, even though they are not directly dedicated to him. These include: an image of the god, along with those of other Underworld deities, in the sanctuary of the Semnai Theai at Athens;<sup>88</sup> a temple dedicated to Artemis Soteira in Troezen which contains altars to the gods who rule under the earth (it was said that this was the location of Semele’s return to the upper world after her rescue by Dionysos, and also where Herakles dragged Kerberos up from the Underworld);<sup>89</sup> an image of the Underworld god appears alongside Demeter and Kore, and the Moirai, in a temple of Apollo at Amyklai in Lakadaimonia;<sup>90</sup> and at the temple of Athena in Phokis, Hades was in some way involved in dedications presented to the goddess.<sup>91</sup> Hades is only mentioned by name in reference to the cult at Elis and the temple of Athena at Phokis; in most other circumstances, the named god is Plouton. These, however, only provide an indication of the long-lasting cultic dedications, which may have been made to Hades. There is much reason to think that the majority of cultic

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<sup>85</sup> Burton 2011: 1.

<sup>86</sup> Garland 1985: 53.

<sup>87</sup> Garland 1985: 53.

<sup>88</sup> Paus. 1.28.6.

<sup>89</sup> Paus. 2.31.2.

<sup>90</sup> Paus. 3.19.4.

<sup>91</sup> Strab. 9.2.29.

worship of Hades – in fact of any ‘chthonian’ deity – may have been much less enduring, and this will be elucidated below.<sup>92</sup>

In regard to cults in which Hades takes a leading role, the most well-known is the cult in the western Peloponnesian city of Elis. Strabo mentions that a *temenos* was dedicated to Hades here and that it was situated near to a river named Acheron by virtue of its close association with the god. Strabo says that Hades’ cult maintained a close relationship to nearby cults of Demeter and Persephone because the locals might have<sup>93</sup> believed that the land would produce either a plentiful harvest or no harvest at all.<sup>94</sup> Pausanias notes that the temple here was only opened once each year and that, even then, only the priest was permitted to enter. This restriction was due to the axiom that each man may only enter the realm of Hades once, upon his death, and by so entering the temple here he would be, in effect, dying.<sup>95</sup>

Pausanias links the sanctuary at Elis to the war between the local Pylians and Herakles’ forces during which time Hades fought for the Eleans. This was not because of any particular affinity the god had with the local population, but due to his intense hatred of Herakles.<sup>96</sup> This animosity is explained by Pausanias using the Homeric story of Herakles shooting and wounding Hades with an arrow.<sup>97</sup> Pausanias claims that the Eleans dedicated the sanctuary to Hades as their ally in battle, not as lord of the Underworld. The proximity of the sanctuary to the temple of Demeter

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<sup>92</sup> See also appendix four.

<sup>93</sup> Strabo says they ‘perhaps’ believed, using the word τάχα.

<sup>94</sup> Strab. 8.3.15. See also Atherton 2002: 160, 184 n. 111.

<sup>95</sup> Paus. 6.25.3; cf. 5.18.8; Corbett 1970: 151; Coleman and Abramovitz 1986: 159, 164–165; J. E. Harrison 1908: 13. There are, of course, some examples of mortals who enter the realm of Hades prior to their deaths – Herakles and Theseus are the most obvious examples. Alkestis also enters Hades and returns to the living again, though unlike the heroes she dies and is resurrected, rather than descending into the Underworld while still living. For Herakles see Hom. *Il.* 8.366–369; *Od.* 11.623–625; Bakchylides *fr.* 5 (Campbell), Aristoph. *Fr.* 468–469. For Theseus see Pl. 391c–d; ps-Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.23–24, 2.124. For Alkestis see Eur. *Alk.*

<sup>96</sup> Paus. 6.25.2–3.

<sup>97</sup> Paus. 6.25.3; cf. Hom. *Il.* 5.395–397. Other causes for hostility might include Herakles slaughtering a cow belonging to Hades, the abduction of Kerberos from the Underworld (ps-Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.125), or Herakles undertaking to rescue Theseus from Hades (ps-Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.124; Diod. 4.26.1; Ael. *VH* 4.5.).

and Persephone, however, creates a clear juxtaposition between the agrarian fertility and the death-related infertility of the Underworld god. This, coupled with the closeness to the river Acheron, indicates that this may have been, if not originally then after some time, related to the god in his Underworld context. Even the name of the city in which this occurs can give us a clue to this cult, according to Harrison:<sup>98</sup> Pylos comes from the Greek πύλος, meaning 'in the gateway' and explained as the entrance to the gates of Hades,<sup>99</sup> and it is at the western point of the Greek mainland, that is, the direction of the setting sun.

Although we have previously delineated Hades and Plouton as separate gods in the archaic and classical periods, albeit with some overlapping qualities and iconography, by the later classical period it is significantly more likely that they were considered to be interchangeable. This can, in part, be seen by their conflation in the Orphic *Hymn to Plouton*, which names Plouton as the perpetrator of acts committed by Hades, such as Persephone's abduction.<sup>100</sup> Although these 'history writers' – here specifically Pausanias and Strabo – use both 'Plouton' and 'Hades', they are never interchanged during the discussion of a single location or cult. The fact that both writers emphasise that the cult at Elis was specifically a cult of Hades, and that this was remarkable in its individuality, points towards a local disambiguation between the two gods. It may appear superficially that Hades and Plouton have been completely amalgamated, but that they retain local and authorial variation. In other words, at this stage Plouton and Hades may be the same god, or at least interchangeable, in literary contexts. In local cults, however, the two gods were still being clearly differentiated from one another. This could indicate that sites which are described by these later authors as being dedicated to Plouton may have originally been cults of Hades – and indeed may still have been. It seems more likely that re-labelling of cults should happen this way (that is, from cults of Hades, to

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<sup>98</sup> J. E. Harrison 1908: 13.

<sup>99</sup> cf. Hom. *Il.* 5.397.

<sup>100</sup> Orph. *Hymn.* 18.

those of Plouton, rather than *vice versa*) given that Ploutonic attributes were, in general, more positive than those of Hades, even though he had a longer-standing and more prestigious mythic heritage in early literature than Plouton. What is clear, though, is that there were originally two separate characterisations: one an agrarian god who was originally only called Plouton, and the other an Underworld ruler who was only referred to as Hades. Over time, the two may have been conflated in name but their major aspects remained separate.

### Conclusion

The god of the Underworld is a shady character in Homer and Hesiod, and this shadowy characteristic continues on into his iconographic and cultic presence. In the early literature, 'Aidoneus' is a more concretely realised Underworld god whereas 'Hades' often references only the Underworld as a place. There are many circumstances in Homeric poetry in which it is unclear, even in a wider context, whether the reference is to the god or the locality. Hades does not play a strong role in eschatology, and is not invoked during funerary rituals or burial rites.

One of Hades' most prominent roles is in the abduction of Persephone, the most well-known telling of which occurs in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. As we have seen, it is often considered to be an aetiology for the Eleusinian Mysteries;<sup>101</sup> however, none of the gods presented there directly, and unambiguously, represent Hades. We have seen in this chapter that iconographically and aspectually there are many differences between Hades and the Eleusinian god Plouton, and Hades may be more closely linked to the Eleusinian god Theos, although identification cannot be certain.

It is often said that Hades is a god who receives no cult dedication, and this is, for the most part, true. As we have seen in this chapter, the god receives cultic dedication in Elis, near the river Acheron, and the Nekyomanteion which is situated there. This may be the only (knowable) instance of cult dedication to Hades. He

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<sup>101</sup> For example, Albinus 2000: 157.

does, however, have roles in cults of other gods, most notably Demeter and Kore. This is particularly true of mythic aetiology, and particularly of the (reverse) aetiology of Eleusis.<sup>102</sup> However, sometimes the god referenced in these circumstances is Plouton rather than Hades. In the late classical and early Hellenistic periods, there is a conflation between these two gods that does not occur in earlier cult or literature there is still, however, a clear distinction between the agrarian god and the Underworld divinity.

Cults in which Hades plays a mythological role predominantly have strong agricultural connotations, and the god's role in such narratives hints at the place of death in fertility narratives. Whether that role is a representative death-and-rebirth, as in mythic coming-of-age narratives or in the life cycle of agriculture, his inclusion in such narratives highlights the importance of the 'death' aspect. This is perhaps where Hades becomes a god with great influence over the mortal world – because without death there can be no life, and he represents that death aspect in a large number of narratives.

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<sup>102</sup> That is, the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, and the narrative surrounding Hades abduction of Persephone.

## 4: Persephone, Queen of the Underworld

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There are two prominent Persephonean guises that we find in the ancient literary sources: Hades' abductee maiden-turned-wife and established Queen of the Underworld. Although these guises often intersect, they are most clearly delineated by an examination of the presentation of the goddess in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* and in the *Iliad*. In the Homeric Hymn, as in a number of cults that feature Persephone worship, we find one of the most characteristic aspects of the presentation of this goddess, namely the pairing with her mother Demeter. It is not unusual to find gods paired in this way, both in mythic narratives and in cult settings, but no other divine pair in the Greek world consists of a mother and daughter.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will first discuss Persephone's two separated representations before moving on to a more complete discussion of Persephonean presentation in literature of the archaic and classical periods, and her textual presentation in the so-called 'Orphic' gold tablets of various dates. This mythic discussion will be followed by the case-study of the Persephone cult in the Southern Italian town of Lokroi, and a few connections will be drawn between this cult and the mythic tradition of 'Brides of Hades' and funerary practices in Athens.

### Persephone in Modern Scholarship

In his seminal work, *Greek Religion*, Burkert does not dedicate a section under the heading 'The Gods' to Persephone, although much of the entry under 'Demeter' is taken up with discussion of her. Burkert's first mention of Persephone links her with a Bronze Age image found on a plate in Phaistos, which depicts two girls dancing around a central, snake-like maiden figure. Burkert draws a link between the scene of Persephone and her flower-picking companions to the 'traditional' representation of her mythic abduction, and he goes on to connect the plate's

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<sup>1</sup> Zuntz 1971: 75.

image to festivals of the dead and tomb-dancing festivals, and he suggests that the central figure may be a likeness of the Mistress of the Underworld.<sup>2</sup> What is striking about Burkert's mention of Persephone here is that it clearly elucidates what can occur when multiple conceptions of a divinity are consolidated into one homogenous picture. The only connection one might make between the image on the plate and the Persephone picking flowers with the Okeanids prior to her abduction in, for example, the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*,<sup>3</sup> is that she is a central goddess, with attendants, and is located within a field (although it is noteworthy that their actions – dancing and picking flowers – are different). The connection to Persephone comes more strongly when Burkert introduces the idea that the central snake-maiden can be viewed as the Mistress of the Underworld and therefore connected to death-related ritual practices. But are these two images – pre-abduction maiden Persephone and Mistress of the Underworld – easily aligned with one another in this sweeping way? There is a tendency in older scholarship,<sup>4</sup> to create this artificial conflation of two of the main mythic personas of Persephone and to apply that double-guise into her cultic presences as well, but as we shall see, this is an erroneous position to take.

When Burkert eventually discusses Persephone directly, he makes the bold claim that Persephone is the name of Kore, the maiden goddess, and he again amalgamates the maiden aspect of Persephone and her mythic role as an Underworld ruler.<sup>5</sup> Burkert's concludes that Persephone's rape narrative is aetiological of the agricultural seasons, and that Kore/Persephone represents the corn-seed that is planted in the earth. Concepts of Kore as representative of the corn-seed, or seed more generally, are grounded in the idea that the ultimate revelation of the Eleusinian Mysteries was, particularly according to Sourvinou-

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<sup>2</sup> Burkert 1985: 45.

<sup>3</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Richardson 1985: 57-58.

<sup>5</sup> Burkert 1985: 159.



Inwood's reconstruction, the 'miraculous finding of a an unseasonable ear of corn'.<sup>6</sup> It was this 'miraculous finding', rather than the corn itself, that was the culmination of the initiation rite. As representations of corn are plentiful in both Eleusinian and Kore-related iconography, as well as in agrarian iconography more generally, the corn itself is not remarkable. Clinton also concludes that the climax of the initiation rites was the revelation of an ear of 'grain' or 'wheat'.<sup>7</sup> He comments that 'most historians of Greek religion' now accept this grain-revelation at some point during the initiatory rites, although he associates the act with the appearance of Ploutos, rather than Persephone herself. It is irrelevant to this discussion whether the 'corn' or 'wheat' more accurately fits the ritual context, what is important is the association between Persephone and agriculture, and the important point that neither Sourvinou-Inwood nor Clinton discuss the Eleusinian Mysteries in relation to Persephone, but rather to Kore.

The confusion between the two divinities – if they are two distinct divinities – occurs, in part, due to the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. The hymn recounts the narrative of Persephone's abduction by Hades, Lord of the Underworld, and, as previously mentioned, is sometimes presented as an aetiology for the Eleusinian Mysteries. The presence of 'Kore' in the Eleusinian cult and 'Persephone' in the hymn, and the idea that the 'sacred drama' performed at Eleusis<sup>8</sup> plays out the story of Persephone's abduction and rape as told in the hymn, confuses these two divinities where they might otherwise be more clearly delineated. The closing lines of the *hymn* state that Eleusis is possessed by both Demeter and her daughter, the κούρη περικαλλής Περσεφόνηια ('very beautiful maiden Persephone').<sup>9</sup> This may have been the definitive identification made by Homer that Pausanias refers to,<sup>10</sup> as Homer does not attempt to make a connection between Persephone and either

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<sup>6</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 35.

<sup>7</sup> Clinton 1992: 94.

<sup>8</sup> See Clinton 1992: 84-90. Clinton 1992: 84-90.

<sup>9</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 494.

<sup>10</sup> Paus. 8.37.9.

'Kore' or Demeter in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. This lack of connection, to either the 'Kore' epithet or to Demeter, shows that the Persephone of the two epic poems has no connection to the agrarian goddess of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Yet, we find Kore and Persephone being presented as one and the same, although this identification is by no means uncomplicated or final. For example, in Foley's *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: Translation, Commentary and Interpretive Essays* she comments that 'the *hymn* honours the Greek goddess of grain Demeter, and her daughter Kore ("maiden") or Persephone'.<sup>11</sup> Burkert says that 'Kore's own enigmatic name is Persephone'.<sup>12</sup> Calame, in the discussion of the myth of Persephone's rape in *Greek Mythology: Poetics, Pragmatics and Fiction*, seems arbitrarily to switch between referring to Persephone and Kore (for example, on page sixty he refers to 'the story of the abduction of Persephone' while two pages later says 'the hymn that tells the story of Core's abduction', both in reference to the content of the Homeric hymn).<sup>13</sup> What is more usual, however, is for the two divinities to be conflated in discussions of the Eleusinian Mysteries, rather than the Homeric hymn. Simon, for example, discusses 'Kore-Persephone' in her exegesis of the mysteries.<sup>14</sup> Avagianou directly addresses the problematic situation in identifying Kore: 'the name Kore for Persephone: The question that arises is not whether Kore and Persephone were one or two goddesses. I think undoubtedly they must be identical'.<sup>15</sup> Farnell deduces that the name Kore was simply an abbreviation of the fuller title 'Persephone-Kore', and that the two goddesses were one and the same, citing parallels including the cultic title of Hera at Stymphalos being "Ἡρὰ Παῖς ('Hera the girl'). He goes on to comment that 'the ritual-testimony compels us to say that the young corn-maiden was always indistinguishable from the chthonian goddess, that at no period is Kore shown to be the former only and not also the latter'.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Foley 1994: 79.

<sup>12</sup> Burkert 1985: 159.

<sup>13</sup> Calame 2009: 60-62.

<sup>14</sup> Simon 1983: 25.

<sup>15</sup> Avagianou 1991: 131.

<sup>16</sup> Farnell 1907: 120-121.

Zuntz put forward the hypothesis that the Persephone and Demeter pair is actually a trinity comprising of the Mother (Demeter), the 'Maiden or Daughter' (Kore), and Persephone. This schema operates on the idea that Persephone was of non-Indo-European heritage and could not, therefore, be the daughter of an indigenous Greek mother.<sup>17</sup> Both Zuntz and Wilamowitz-Moellendorf consider Persephone to be the Queen of the Underworld,<sup>18</sup> while Kore represents the agrarian daughter and divine-partner of Demeter. As Zuntz says, 'no farmer prayed for corn to Persephone, no mourner thought of the dead as being with Kore'.<sup>19</sup> This could indicate the possibility that there is a closer association between Persephone and Demeter's other mythic daughter, Despoina – 'the Mistress' – rather than with Kore. However, as Persephone and Kore are traditionally the amalgamated pair, connection with Despoina will not be discussed in this chapter.

As we have seen, there is much scholarship that considers this question of whether Persephone and Kore are interchangeable. Treatments of Persephone without this overriding question are, understandably, rare – but Persephone is used in scholarship in another way as well, and that is as the 'flagship' goddess of studies of girls' initiations or women's rituals – for example, a collection of essays that stems from a conference on women's rituals is titled *Finding Persephone: Women's Rituals in the Ancient Mediterranean*,<sup>20</sup> and Lincoln uses Persephone's rape myth as a motif for women's initiation rituals.<sup>21</sup> These treatments, however, do not take the place of studies utilising other goddesses in these ways. For example, Artemis is still considered to be the primary pattern of girls' initiation rites, due to the cult dedicated to her at Brauron and Mounichia, and the associated religious festival of the Arkteia.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Zuntz 1971: 75.

<sup>18</sup> Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1931: 109; Zuntz 1971: 77.

<sup>19</sup> Zuntz 1971: 77.

<sup>20</sup> Parca and Tzanetou 2007.

<sup>21</sup> Lincoln 1979.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Sourvinou-Inwood 1988; Smith 2003; Gentili and Perusino 2002.

## Persephone in Homer and Hesiod

Persephone's abduction by Hades is treated briefly in Hesiod's *Theogony*<sup>23</sup> where the incident itself and Zeus' approval of the union are the only details provided. Aside from this, the few references to Persephone in the poem recognise her relationship with Hades and connection to the Underworld.<sup>24</sup> In both instances in the *Theogony*, the construction used is Ἄδew καὶ ἐπαινῆς Περσεφονείης ('Hades and dread Persephone'). The single mention that is extant in the fragments of the *Catalogue of Women* simply mentions Ἄδew καὶ Περσεφόνεια.<sup>25</sup> In the first of the two mentions in *The Descent of Peirithous to Hades*, Persephone is called ἀγαυὴν ('illustrious').<sup>26</sup> In the second, the narrator is commenting on the closeness of Hades and Persephone relationship prior to their marriage, specifically that Hades is Persephone's uncle.<sup>27</sup>

Homer's *Iliad* does not present the goddess as a more concretely imagined character than in Hesiod. As in Hesiod, she always appears alongside Hades, and in the context of her role as Queen of the Underworld, she is often described by the adjective ἐπαινῆ ('dread').<sup>28</sup> The term is only found in the Homeric corpus,<sup>29</sup> in the feminine, and it likely represents an earlier elision of ἐπ' αἰνή. Reece comments on this:

It looks as though ἐπαινῆ is a misanalysis of ἐπ' αἰνή, with ἐπι used adverbially 'and in addition dreadful Persephone', since the epithet occurs only when Persephone is introduced as the second of a pair of divinities (i.e., so-and-so καὶ ἐπ' αἰνή Περσεφόνεια). The fact that

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<sup>23</sup> Hes. *Th.* 914-915.

<sup>24</sup> Hes. *Th.* 768, 774; fr. 123.4, 216.12, 216.20 (Most).

<sup>25</sup> Hes. *fr.* 123.4 (Most). There has been some debate and disagreement among scholars about the date and genuineness of the *Catalogue of Women*. In antiquity, the work was accepted as being genuine. For an excellent discussion on the debate and the authorship of the *Catalogue* see Clay 2005: 25-26, particularly n. 22, 23. As this fragment from the *Catalogue of Women* does not present a markedly different image of Persephone than other Hesiodic works, I shall not comment further on the authorship of the work here.

<sup>26</sup> Hes. *fr.* 216.12 (Most).

<sup>27</sup> Hes. *fr.* 216.15-22 (Most).

<sup>28</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.457, 9.569; *Od.* 10.491, 10.534, 10.564, 11.47.

<sup>29</sup> It appears six times in Homer, at *Il.* 9.457, 9.569; *Od.* 10.491, 10.534, 10.564; 11.47, and three times in later Homeric imitation-style texts, in Lucian, Triphiodorus and the Greek Anthology.

ἐπαινὴ is so isolated lexically indicates that this is no early bardic metaanalysis, for in that case it would probably have taken on at least some life of its own outside the phonetic environment that created it. On the other hand, the fact that ἐπαινὴ is the reading in all extant manuscripts, as well as in all ancient commentaries and lexica, indicates that the resegmentation occurred very early indeed. Perhaps we are witness here to a misanalysis by an amanuensis during the actual event of bardic dictation.<sup>30</sup>

All mentions of Persephone in the *Odyssey* occur either during Kirke's description of the Underworld or Odysseus' voyage into it,<sup>31</sup> creating an unmistakable 'chthonic' single-persona for the goddess in this poem. Homer does not mention Persephone's abduction, in either poem, and she is therefore presented solely within the context of her role as Queen of the Underworld. She appears in a significantly more active role than Hades in regards to treatment of and interaction with the dead, as though Hades is an absent custodian and Persephone is the present matron who exercises a direct influence over the deceased. For instance, she has the power to grant the seer Teiresias cognitive reason and understanding, and he alone of all the 'witless dead' are given this ability.<sup>32</sup> Odysseus describes her ushering the shades of women forward, toward the pit of blood he had provided,<sup>33</sup> and scattering them away again.<sup>34</sup> This shows that she has power both to change the conditions of death for specific individuals, as in the case of Teiresias, and to exhibit a more generalized influence over the actions of the dead.

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<sup>30</sup> Reece 2009: 32 n. 35.

<sup>31</sup> Hom. *Od.* 10.494, 10.509, 11.213, 11.217, 11.226, 11.386, 11.635.

<sup>32</sup> Hom. *Od.* 10.492-495.

<sup>33</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.225-227.

<sup>34</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.386. It is interesting to note that all the dead who appear in this scene can be described under different categories of 'special' dead: unmarried women and other premature dead, unburied and unwashed soldiers, and the elderly. For more on 'special dead' see appendix one, and Garland 1985: 77-103. cf. Johnston 1999: 127-160.

### The Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*

Persephone's abduction is narrated extensively in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. Although Zeus' permission for his daughter's marriage is given,<sup>35</sup> it is nevertheless made clear that, at the point of her abduction, Persephone herself feels under duress. For instance, the poet-narrator<sup>36</sup> comments that:

ἀρπάξας δ' ἄέκουσαν ἐπὶ χρυσεόισιν ὄχοισιν  
ἦγ' ὀλοφυρομένην: ἰάχησε δ' ἄρ' ὄρθια φωνῇ  
κεκλομένη πατέρα Κρονίδα ὕπατον καὶ ἄριστον.

Seizing her up on his golden chariot--she was unwilling--  
Drove her off; as she screamed and wailed at the top of her voice and  
Called on her father, the highest and noblest, the successor of Kronos.<sup>37</sup>

Persephone's self-victimisation is not necessarily as clear cut as it appears on the surface. Later in this chapter, we shall see an example of a Persephonean cult that uses the motif of abduction in a pre-marriage ritual, in which some images show girls who clearly do not feel victimized by their impending 'abduction' – that is, their marriage. The politics of sexual consent in the ancient world are highly problematic in an historical context<sup>38</sup> and this is further problematised within the Homeric hymn, where Persephone's own sense of self-identity appears to change from aggrieved victim to wife.

The loss of virginity is central to marriage rites and an important aspect in the transition from girl to wife. The hymn specifically describes Persephone as being ἄγνή<sup>39</sup> – pure or chaste – prior to her rescue from the Underworld by Hermes. When Hades is confronted regarding her release, he gives Persephone a pomegranate seed to eat,<sup>40</sup> although she later declares to Demeter that he forced

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<sup>35</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 2.

<sup>36</sup> For a full discussion of narration and the narrator in the Homeric Hymns, see Nünlist 2004: 35-42.

<sup>37</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 19-21.

<sup>38</sup> Omitowaju 2002: 26-28, 51. see also Cohen 1993.

<sup>39</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 337.

<sup>40</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 372.

it upon her.<sup>41</sup> Her consumption of the seed symbolizes Persephone's acceptance of Hades' hospitality, as she breaks her fast even while the famine above her rages on;<sup>42</sup> however, this cannot be true if Hades has secretly slipped the pomegranate seed to her, as the narrator claims, nor if he forced it upon her as Persephone herself claims. And both scenarios cannot be simultaneously true. Persephone cannot be the victim of physical violence and cannot have also been tricked into eating the pomegranate seed, even if Hades is utilising some kind of magic spell to induce the maiden to eat the seed, which will be discussed in more detail below.

The pomegranate has a well-established iconographical connection to Persephone, particularly to her role as Hades' bride, including within representations of the goddess on grave markers and stele.<sup>43</sup> There is also inclusion of pomegranate eating or abstinence in various festivals dedicated to the goddess and her mother Demeter.<sup>44</sup> The pomegranate has a more general connection with death and is not only shown on tombs in the Greek world but found on tombs in the Near Eastern world as well. Two prominent examples, which show images of pomegranates being used in contexts similar to those found in Persephone related iconography, are the commonly named 'Harpy Tomb' from Xanthos in Lykia,<sup>45</sup> and the hero relief from Chrysapha in Lakonia.<sup>46</sup> Persephone is shown in the Lokrian pinakes, which will be discussed in detail below, being offered pomegranates by divine dedicants, and worshipers offered gifts of terracotta pomegranates at her temple in Lokroi.<sup>47</sup> Pomegranates have a strong connection to the Underworld and with fertility,<sup>48</sup> and there is some evidence that they were used in love spells,<sup>49</sup> although it is more likely that the pomegranate in this narrative is just a more contextually appropriate

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<sup>41</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 413.

<sup>42</sup> Foley 1994: 56.

<sup>43</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 248-250.

<sup>44</sup> Eating: Thesmophoria, see Clem. *Protr.* 2.19.3. Abstaining: Haloo. Deubner 1966: 58; Brumfield 1981: 84, 112.

<sup>45</sup> Tonks 1907: 324, 325, 326, 327, 329, 332, 335. cf. Tritsch 1942.

<sup>46</sup> Berlin 731; Boardman 1999: fig. 253.

<sup>47</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1978: 108.

<sup>48</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1978: 108; Still 2006: 199.

<sup>49</sup> Faraone 2001: 75-76.

substitute for an apple, which is more widely used in such spells. It should be noted here that μῆλον, which is most usually translated as ‘apple’ (as here) could indicate any type of tree-fruit, and that the pomegranate fits this description and so could be an acceptable substitute.<sup>50</sup> The type of love spell that apple seeds and fruit are used for are, as categorised by Faraone, those typically used by men to induce physical, uncontrollable lust in women, and which he describes as being ‘used by an outsider in courtship or seduction to destroy existing loyalties to natal family, spouse, or community’.<sup>51</sup> This motivation also describes some of Hades’ desire to keep Persephone in the Underworld, and to create a disconnection between the young goddess and her mother. The narrator describes this act:

αὐτὰρ ὃ γ’ αὐτὸς  
 ῥοιῆς κόκκον ἔδωκε φαγεῖν μελιιδέα λάθρη,  
 ἄμφι ἔνωμήσας, ἵνα μὴ μένοι ἥματα πάντα  
 αὖθι παρ’ αἰδοίῃ Δημήτερι κυανοπέπλω.

But he gave her a honey-sweet pomegranate seed to eat, secretly, taking care for himself that she might not continually stay beside revered, dark-veiled Demeter.<sup>52</sup>

Therefore, the situation we find is that Persephone may have been enchanted into eating the seed, which had been ‘secretly consecrated’ (λάθρη ἄμφι ἔνωμήσας)<sup>53</sup> to act as a magical object, and she later links this type of metaphysical ‘forcing’ with being physically forced to eat against her will. The issue of force is important here, as ancient definitions of rape included violence or threats of violence.<sup>54</sup> More accurately, this is the idea of βία – bodily strength or force; in its associated verb form βιάω it can have a connotation of compulsion. Both the noun

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<sup>50</sup> I shall, however, be using the term ‘apple’ for two reasons: firstly because the most common translation of μῆλον is apple, and secondly to differentiate the subject of the love-spells and Persephone’s rape/marriage.

<sup>51</sup> Faraone 2002: 402, 406.

<sup>52</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 372-374.

<sup>53</sup> Faraone 2001: 76; Lefkowitz 1993: 31.

<sup>54</sup> Carey 1995: 409.



and verb forms are used to indicate forced sexual intercourse,<sup>55</sup> and it is with this term that the poet of the Homeric Hymn describes Hades compelling the young goddess to eat the pomegranate seed.<sup>56</sup> Violent force is not a usual component of narratives involving the gods' sexual exploits, and these should, for the most part, be categorised as 'seduction narratives';<sup>57</sup> so the inclusion of force in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* is striking, particularly with the added connotation of sexual coercion given by the concept of force. When Hades gives Persephone the pomegranate seed he is undertaking two distinct actions: taking her virginity by force and casting a love spell over her, of the type typically used by men.

More widely, the apple, and other tree-fruits that might be referred to as μήλα including pomegranates, have a less sinister role to play in marriage rites.<sup>58</sup> Plutarch tells us that brides should eat a quince – a μήλον Κυδώνιον – prior to entering into the marital bed, attributing the advice to Solon.<sup>59</sup> This was presumably not only to sweeten the breath and speech of the bride, as Plutarch suggests, but because acceptance of the first pieces of food from the groom's family home symbolized the bride's acceptance of her new husband and her love for him.<sup>60</sup> This custom may also be thought of as a kind of 'sympathetic magic' that encouraged fertility in the newlywed couple.<sup>61</sup> The apple has a strong connection to Aphrodite, and therefore has a connotation of love and lust.<sup>62</sup> One version of the origin story of the apple makes it a gift at the wedding of Zeus and Hera, later these gift apples became the golden apples that Herakles was tasked with retrieving from the

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<sup>55</sup> Omitowaju 2002: 54, 70-71. For example, Hdt. 3.80.5; Aisch. *Supp.* 798; Hom. *Il.* 1.430; Pl. *Leg.* 874c; Lys. 1.32.

<sup>56</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 414.

<sup>57</sup> Lefkowitz 1993: 22.

<sup>58</sup> Several authors mention the relationship between marriage and apples or fruits which may be described by μήλον, for example: Stesich. *fr.* 10 (Page), where quinces were thrown at the wedding chariot of Menelaos and Helen; Sapph. *fr.* 105 (Lobel and Page), where the bride is compared to a blushing apple just out of reach of the picker.

<sup>59</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 138d.

<sup>60</sup> Oakley and Sinos 1993.

<sup>61</sup> Littlewood 1968: 155.

<sup>62</sup> Foster 1899: 40-42.

Hyperboreans.<sup>63</sup> Lovers also reportedly threw apples at one another to demonstrate their affection,<sup>64</sup> there are, for example, two epigrams in book 5 of the *Greek Anthology* that talk about this practice, both attributed to Plato. The first says:

Τῷ μήλῳ βάλλω σε· σὺ δ' εἰ μὲν ἐκοῦσα φιλεῖς με,  
δεξαμένη, τῆς σῆς παρθενίης μετάδος·  
εἰ δ' ἄρ' ὃ μὴ γίγνοιτο νοεῖς, τοῦτ' αὐτὸ λαβοῦσα  
σκέψαι τὴν ὥρην ὡς ὀλιγοχρόνιος.

I strike you with an apple. And you, if you love me willingly  
then receive the apple, and give in return your virginity.  
But if you think what I wish you would not, take this same  
and think how short the moment will last.<sup>65</sup>

The second is written from the perspective of the apple itself:

Μῆλον ἐγὼ· βάλλει με φιλῶν σέ τις. ἀλλ'  
ἐπινευσον,  
Ξανθίππη· κάγῳ καὶ σὺ μαραινόμεθα.

I am an apple; one who loves you throws me at you. Consent, Xanthippe; or  
both you and I will decay.<sup>66</sup>

The ingestion of the pomegranate seed is, more than anything else, a metaphorical representation of Persephone's loss of virginity. If this is the case, her claim of βία, rather than being the subject of trickery, is that Hades had bewitched her into committing an act commonly undertaken by a new wife. Only ten lines above the narration of Persephone's claim of force, Hades is described as her ἀκοίτης, a word that derives from κοίτη ('bed') and carries a connotation of sexual union. The sexual union of newlyweds is a key component in the completion of their marriage rites,<sup>67</sup> and Hades is clearly described as being Persephone's

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<sup>63</sup> Foster 1899: 40-42. Pherecyd. *fr.* 33 (Müller) apud Schol. Ap. Rhod. 4.1396; Erastosth. *Cat.* 3; Asclep. Mend. *fr.* 1 (Müller); ps-Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.11.

<sup>64</sup> Ormand 2009: 123-124; Trumf 1960: 16-19.

<sup>65</sup> *Greek Anthology.* 5.79. (trans. Paton)

<sup>66</sup> *Greek Anthology.* 5.80. (trans. Paton)

<sup>67</sup> Sissa 1990: 93-94.

husband, which indicates that they must have undertaken this aspect of their own marriage rites. This marriage is the type that Faraone describes as ‘bridal theft’ or ‘abduction marriages’ which is the result of an ‘apple spell’ having been cast (usually by a man).<sup>68</sup> These, as we will see in the discussion of the Lokrian pinakes, may involve a bride who feigns unwillingness to marriage, and who could even play a leading role in masterminding her own ‘kidnapping’. Rape victims, at least in classical Athens, were not considered to have undertaken any wrongdoing and were therefore not liable to legal punishment; in comparison, women who had been seduced, and had therefore been consenting partners, were subject to punishment.<sup>69</sup> If Persephone truly felt that she had been taken advantage of, by magic or force, the audience would have understood – as per their own laws and legal ideology – that she had legal recourse to deny her union with Hades rather than to, eventually, consent to the marriage by her willingness to spend part of the year in the Underworld with him.<sup>70</sup> Beyond that, the objection voiced by Demeter is not to Hades as a husband for her daughter, and Helios points out to Demeter that Hades is actually quite a desirable son-in-law:

μάψ αὐτως ἄπλητον ἔχειν χόλον: οὐ τοι ἀεικὴς  
γαμβρὸς ἐν ἀθανάτοισι πολυσημάντωρ Ἀϊδωνεὺς  
αὐτοκασίγνητος καὶ ὁμόσπορος: ἀμφὶ δὲ τιμὴν  
ἔλλαχεν ὡς τὰ πρῶτα διάτρηχα δασμὸς ἐτύχθη:  
τοῖς μεταναιετάει τῶν ἔλλαχε κοίρανος εἶναι.

Aidoneus, Ruler of Many, is not an unsuitable  
Son-in-law; he is your brother. And furthermore he obtained worship  
At the first threefold division of worlds when their doom was decided,

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<sup>68</sup> Faraone 2001: 79.

<sup>69</sup> Carey 1995: 414.

<sup>70</sup> It is tempting to agree with Lefkowitz’s argument that Persephone’s post-marriage positions is a positive mythic template for women’s marriage: choose the right man and you can gain recognition as an individual member of society – or, as she says: ‘however unwilling Persephone has been to be led off by Hades and to remain for some part of the year in his home, through her marriage she gains a new importance and a kingdom of her own’. (Lefkowitz 1993: 33.) However, as we have seen, the Persephone of the hymn, like the Kore of Eleusinian cult, does not gain ‘a kingdom of her own’. I presume that Lefkowitz is referring to Persephone in her mythic guise as Queen of the Underworld – a guise that is completely absent from the hymn.

He dwells with those whose ruler he was appointed to be.<sup>71</sup>

Demeter's anger stems, rather, from her own sense of loss.<sup>72</sup> Likewise, Persephone does not voice an opinion about the suitability of her new husband; indeed her eventual acceptance of him indicates that she does find him acceptable.

### The Eleusinian Mysteries and the Thesophoria

In cult, Persephone most often appears alongside her mother Demeter, and the aspect of Persephone as subservient to Demeter is akin to the representation of the goddess in the Homeric hymn. Here, as in a number of cults associated with the two goddesses, Persephone has a strong connection to the agricultural seasons though association with Demeter.<sup>73</sup> Persephone herself, in the Homeric hymn and in various cults, does not dictate seasonal changes but is nonetheless aetiologically responsible for the seasons, which are a consequence of Demeter's grief over her daughter's absence. That is not to say that worshipers of Persephone in her agrarian guise would not understand the goddess in the context of her role as Queen of the Underworld. Persephone's presentation as Queen of the Underworld in Homer, Hesiod, and other literary and non-literary representations that worshipers were familiar with would have cemented the eschatological role of the goddess, even in agrarian contexts. However, the figure worshiped in many of the agrarian cultic contexts alongside Demeter was not Persephone but Kore, the Maiden, and this would have removed Persephone's Underworld connotation from the particular

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<sup>71</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 83-87.

<sup>72</sup> Brumfield 1981: 226.

<sup>73</sup> Cole 1994: 201. A large number of Demeter's epithets reflect her connection with agriculture: Chole ('Green Shoot'), Sito ('Grain'), Hymalis ('Abundance'), Ompnia ('Nourisher with Grain'), Achaia ('Reaper'), Ioulos ('Goddess of Grain Sheaves'), Halois ('Goddess of the Threshing Floor'), Megalartos ('Goddess of Wheat Bread'), Megalomazos ('Goddess of Barley Bread'), Hamalophoros ('Bearing Sheaves of Grain'), Plousoros ('Rich in Piles of Grain'), Sotitis ('Giver of Heaps of Grain'), Karpophoros ('She who brings forth fruit'), Anesidora ('She who Sends up Gifts'), Kalligeneia ('She who brings forth beautiful offspring'); see also Farnell 1907: 311-20; M. P. Nilsson 1906: 311-12.

cultic context.<sup>74</sup> Further to this, worshipers would likely have separated aspects of 'single divinities' in their everyday practice. It is not difficult to see how two different – even conflicting – beliefs may be held about a single divinity as long as those conflicting or non-congruent beliefs were not required to be called upon at the same time, and in the same cultic practice.

Identification between the Persephone of the hymn and the Kore worshiped in Eleusinian cult is often assumed in earlier scholarship as being implied, in the cult as it is in the hymn.<sup>75</sup> Pausanias comments on this identification when he states that Kore's name was revealed by Homer – obviously as being Persephone – and thereby equating the two goddesses as one and the same.<sup>76</sup> As Hades is iconographically and aspectually more closely linked with the Eleusinian figure of Theos, than of Plouton, so the mythic Persephone is more closely linked with the Eleusinian figure of Thea than of Kore.<sup>77</sup> Kore does not undertake any proper Underworld-related or eschatological function at Eleusis, and her only connection with the Underworld is the requirement to spend a portion of her year residing there. There is no cultic evidence that she rules or co-rules the Underworld, and this is not implied within the hymn either. That the figure that represents Demeter's daughter in the cult is solely referred to by the title Kore indicates that the divinity here was regarded in

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<sup>74</sup> For example, the Haloa, a mid-winter festival that was held in Eleusis in the month of Poseideon (around December/January) was a festival of Demeter and Kore (Brumfield 1981: 104.), as was the Thesmophoria (Brumfield 1981: 70.), so too the Stenia (Dillon 2002: 109.) and the Greater and Lesser Mysteries.

<sup>75</sup> As we have seen in the discussion of scholarship above. For example, 'Kore's own enigmatic name is Persephone' (Burkert 1985: 159.) and 'the mysteries of Eleusis were devoted to the "Two Goddesses," Demeter the grain goddess and her daughter Persephone, locally called Pherephatta or just "the Maiden," Kore. (Burkert 1987: 4.). Erika Simon, in an archaeological study of Attic cult, uses the term 'Kore-Persephone to describe the Eleusinian goddess, and the index states 'Persephone, see Kore', indicating that the two are one and the same. (Simon 1983: 25.). The same hyphenated name is used, again with no explanation, in Bianchi 1976: e.g. 2. Graf does not go so far as to create a direct amalgam of Kore and Persephone, but does register 'Kore (s. auch Persephone)' and 'Persephone (s. auch Kore)' in his index (Graf 1974). Some scholars, particularly those outside Greek religious studies proper, do not even attempt to acknowledge that there are multiple 'names' that could refer to one (or several) divinities, for instance, 'The Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter and Persephone: Fertility, Sexuality, and Rebirth'. (Keller 1988: 27-54.)

<sup>76</sup> Paus. 8.37.9

<sup>77</sup> Clinton 1992: 114-15.

her agrarian aspect. Even if contemporary worshipers did equate the two goddesses – that is, Persephone as Queen of the dead and as ‘the Maiden’ – there is no indication that they worship would have been influenced by the former. Worshipers, and sacred officials, would have ‘compartmentalised’ the two distinct personae as belonging to different religious contexts and offering dedication to one would not simply bring the other to mind automatically.<sup>78</sup> In this guise, Persephone must be more closely aligned with agrarian-aspects of Demeter rather than with the death-related aspects of Hades. So, she is worshiped alongside Demeter not only at Eleusis, but also in other agrarian-themed festivals throughout the Greek world. The most well-known of these probably being the Thesmophoria.<sup>79</sup>

The Thesmophoria was celebrated widely across the Greek world, including at Athens, Paros, Sicily, and Eritrea.<sup>80</sup> There is evidence that the festival was celebrated in Hellenistic Alexandria as an amalgam of a festival to Isis in her role as mother and provider, and that celebration of the Thesmophoria continued well into the Roman period both on mainland Greece and elsewhere.<sup>81</sup> The Thesmophoria was, at least in Athens where we have the largest amount of evidence, a three-day festival that took place in honour of Demeter and Persephone, in the month of Pyanepsion (around October/November).<sup>82</sup> This was the first month of the autumn, when ploughing and sowing took place,<sup>83</sup> and a number of agricultural-themed festivals occurred, including the Proerosia, another festival of Demeter that was a celebration to officially open ploughing season.

The actual activities that took place over the three days of the Thesmophoria were secret.<sup>84</sup> We do know that the female-only participants camped out in or near

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<sup>78</sup> For further discussion on this concept, see chapter one.

<sup>79</sup> For more on the Thesmophoria see Versnel 2011: 110-20 inc. references.

<sup>80</sup> Cole 1994: 135; Farnell 1907: 83.

<sup>81</sup> M. P. Nilsson 1906: 313.

<sup>82</sup> Isager and Skydsgaard 1992: 162; H. W. Parke 1977: 26.

<sup>83</sup> Isager and Skydsgaard 1992: 168.

<sup>84</sup> Simon 1983: 18.

the sanctuary of Demeter for the three days,<sup>85</sup> and that they fasted on the second day,<sup>86</sup> in apparent imitation of Demeter's fasting in her grief over the loss of Persephone.<sup>87</sup> The festival also involved piglets being thrown down into pits and then being retrieved and,<sup>88</sup> at some stage perhaps on the second day, the use of *aischrologia*, insulting and sexually explicit language.<sup>89</sup> The aim of the festival appears to be the promotion of agrarian and human fecundity, which may account for the women-only nature of the festival as the fertility of the land and the *polis* was controlled by this group of non-citizens.<sup>90</sup>

There are several aspects of the narrative in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* which appear to present an aetiology behind the secret rituals that took place during the Eleusinian Mysteries.<sup>91</sup> But Eleusis was not present in every version of the rape of Persephone and so, as Clinton says, 'the story in the *Homeric Hymn* would seem to be the local Eleusinian version and ought therefore to stand in a fairly close relationship to the Mysteries'.<sup>92</sup> However, as Clinton goes on to point out:

...the hymn is only superficially related to Eleusis (i.e. the Mysteries). The *Hymn*, for instance, has nothing to say about Athenian tradition concerning Eumolpos, the first hierophant, to whom Demeter entrusted the Mysteries, and there is nothing about the important role of Triptolemos. The tradition about the Callichoron Well is imperfectly rendered in the *Hymn*. Eleusinian practice regarding the names of gods, such as Kore, Plouton, and such distinctly Eleusinian deities as Θεός and Θεά, is conspicuously missing. Hekate, a major figure in the *Hymn*, apparently was not worshiped in the Mysteries.

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<sup>85</sup> Parker 2005b: 271. Although Thesmophoriae took place across Attika, in various demes, including one that took place in the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis. See Clinton 1996: 113-15, 21-23.

<sup>86</sup> Faraone 2001: 25.

<sup>87</sup> Faraone 2001: 26.

<sup>88</sup> H. W. Parke 1977: 83.

<sup>89</sup> Simon 1983: 20-22.

<sup>90</sup> Clinton 1996: 112. There was, however, a political inversion that occurred during the Thesmophoria, during which the women 'were symbolically replacing the men at the political centre of the city... there were officials called *archousai* who corresponded to the male *archontes*'. See Bowie 1993: 206-07.

<sup>91</sup> Penglase 1994: 126.

<sup>92</sup> Clinton 1992: 13.

Eleusinian rites, such as Gephyrismos, which may be reflected in the *Hymn*, are merely peripheral in the cult.<sup>93</sup>

There are some elements of the Mysteries which are consistent with parts of the hymn, although these do not make up for the long list of missing components, and so we cannot make the assumption that the hymn itself is a direct aetiology of the Mysteries.

The hymn does, however, provide one detail that is consistent with the representation of Persephone that we will find in Pindar and the 'Orphic' gold lamellae. That, is, Persephone not (necessarily) as a ruler of the dead, but a goddess who can manipulate the conditions of death, and the dead. When, in the hymn, Hades instructs Persephone to go and meet with her mother, he also tells her that:

ἔνθα δ' ἐοῦσα  
δεσπόσσεις πάντων ὅποσα ζῶει τε καὶ ἔρπει,  
τιμὰς δὲ στήσῃσθα μετ' ἀθανάτοισι μεγίστας.  
τῶν δ' ἀδικησάντων τίσις ἔσσεται ἡμᾶτα πάντα,  
οἳ κεν μὴ θυσίῃσι τεὸν μένος ἱλάσκωνται  
εὐαγέως ἔρδοντες, ἐναΐσιμα δῶρα τελοῦντες.

By being here, you will be mistress of everything that lives and moves, and have the greatest privileges among the immortals, while there will ever be punishment for those who act unrighteously and fail to propitiate your fury with sacrifices, in holy performance, making the due offerings.<sup>94</sup>

Here, according to Hades, one of Persephone's honours as a (presumably privileged) citizen of the Underworld, and as Hades' wife, shall be to have vengeance over those mortals who have acted unjustly in life or have failed to properly propitiate to her fury.<sup>95</sup> The recompense paid by the deceased is not against Persephone's own παλαιός πένθος ('ancient grief'), an idea found in Pindar's representation of Persephone and which shall be discussed below, but for their own

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<sup>93</sup> Clinton 1992: 13.

<sup>94</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 364-369. trans. West.

<sup>95</sup> See also Richardson 1974: 269-70.



actions in life. This shows a glimpse of a Persephone who maintains a power over the dead that is more akin to the Persephone shown elsewhere in archaic literature, as Hades promises her a threefold division of her honours; that is, to rule over the earth, to have honours amongst the gods, and to enact vengeance upon those wrongdoers. These also allude to a division of powers between the earth, the heavens and the Underworld, corresponding to her division of time between the earth and the netherworld.<sup>96</sup> The Homeric hymn shows only hints of this Persephonean characterisation and there is no indication that this power is translated into Eleusinian cult.

#### Pindar and 'Orphic' Persephone

The first extant instance of Persephone being clearly elucidated as the ruler of the dead in her own right is in Pindar's odes. Here, Persephone and Hades are never mentioned together, and although she is not always referred to in relation to the Underworld and her role within it, she is presented with attributes commonly associated with Hades in contemporary or near-contemporary literature. For example, in the *Hymn to Persephone*, the goddess is addressed: Πότνια θεσμοφόρε χρυσάνιον (O Law-bringing mistress of the golden reins').<sup>97</sup> The epithet χρυσάνιον ('with reigns of gold') is, according to Pausanias, more ordinarily applied to Hades and so the reference here is to Persephone's rape:

ἐν τούτῳ τῷ ᾠσμάτι ἄλλαι τε ἐς τὸν Ἅιδην εἰσὶν ἐπικλήσεις καὶ ὁ χρυσήνιος, δῆλα ὡς ἐπὶ τῆς Κόρης τῇ ἀρπαγῇ.

Among the epithets he applied to Hades in this song is 'golden-reined', which clearly references Kore's rape.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Richardson 1974: 270.

<sup>97</sup> Pind. *fr.* 37 (Race), trans. Race.

<sup>98</sup> Paus. 9.23.4.

Pindar very plainly describes the Underworld as being Persephone's domain, rather than simply as Ἄϊδης δόμος. For example, Pindar instructs the news of Orchomenios' victory μελανοτειχέα νῦν δόμον Φερσεφόνας ἔλθ' ('to go now into the black-walled house of Persephone')<sup>99</sup> to his deceased father.

Persephone's influence over the dead is further elucidated in a fragment of Pindar found within Plato's *Meno*<sup>100</sup> which speaks of the goddess accepting recompense for her παλαιός πένθος ('ancient grief')<sup>101</sup> from certain individuals, whom she will then send back to the mortal world:

οἷσι δὲ Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος  
δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὕπερθεν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτῳ ἔτει  
ἀνδιδοῖ ψυχὰς πάλιν, ἐκ τᾶν βασιλῆες ἀγαυοί  
καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφίᾳ τε μέγιστοι  
ἄνδρες αὖξοντ'· ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἥροες ἀ-  
γνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλέονται.

But for those from whom Persephone accepts requital for the ancient grief, in the ninth year she returns their soul to the upper sunlight; from them arise proud kings and men who are swift in strength and greatest in wisdom, and for the rest of time they are called sacred by men.<sup>102</sup>

Eschatological issues<sup>103</sup> aside, what this passage clearly shows is an extension of the power that Persephone held over the dead, which we previously saw in Homer where the goddess was able to change the natural condition of death for one of her charges, and manipulate the movements of others. In this fragment from Pindar, too, she has the power to control and change the natural condition of death, but here she is changing the state of death itself.

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<sup>99</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 14.20-21.

<sup>100</sup> Pind. *fr.* 133 (Race), cf. Pl. *Men.* 81b.

<sup>101</sup> Pind. *fr.* 133 (Race), cf. Pl. *Men.* 81b.

<sup>102</sup> Pind. *fr.* 133 (Race), cf. Pl. *Men.* 81b. trans. Race.

<sup>103</sup> These issues include the nine years exile (which will be discussed below), reincarnation, incarnation into a better position in the new life, and reincarnation depending on the payment of recompense.

The passage also challenges the idea that the dead did not need a god to whom they could devote worship, which we have seen very clearly in the discussion relating to the worship dedicated to Hades. Here the souls of the deceased are offering some form of devotion to the goddess and she is, in turn, offering them not only the chance to live again but also the promise of a rewarding and blessed afterlife following their subsequent, second death. It is fairly certain that they are not attempting to gain forgiveness for wrongs they have undertaken during their own lifetimes, and that Persephone's παλαιός πένθος ('ancient grief') is her own private grief and has not been caused by any transgression of these individuals in life.<sup>104</sup> A number of scholars agree that Persephone's grief should be explained as the grief she herself experiences following the murder of her son Dionysos, the result of his murder and consumption by the Titans, and as narrated in Orphic mythology:<sup>105</sup>

*Dionysus was the child of Zeus and Zeus' daughter Persephone. Dionysus succeeded Zeus; Zeus himself placed the child on his throne and declared him the new king of the cosmos. The Titans, jealous of Dionysus' new power and perhaps encouraged by Hera, used various toys, and a mirror, to lure Dionysus away from his guardians, the Curetes, and dismembered him. They cooked his flesh and ate it. Zeus, being angry at this, killed the Titans, and from their remains, humanity arose. Because humanity arose from material that was predominantly Titanic in nature, each human is born with the stain of the Titan's crime, but a remnant of Dionysus leavens the mixture. Each human must expiate the Titan's crime by performing rituals in honour of Dionysus and Persephone, who still suffers from the "ancient grief" of losing her child; by doing so, humans can win better afterlives. Meanwhile Dionysus was in some matter revived or reborn.*<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> H. J. Rose 1936: 84-85. cf. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2011: 80.

<sup>105</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007: 68-69, 157. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 72; Bluck 1961: 278-79; Edmonds 2013: 304, 06; Ionescu 2007: 51-52.

<sup>106</sup> Graf and Johnston 2013: 67. Italicisation is from Johnston's chapter, and indicates portions of the narrative that are embellished from the version found in Olympiodorus, which constitutes the fullest version of the story available and dates from the sixth century CE, additions are from various fragmentary sources. cf. Bernabé 2002: 403; Gantz 1993: 18-119; Morford et al. 2011: 318.

Persephone's rape and abduction by Hades may provide another possible interpretation for her grief. Although both readings would provide equally eschatological responses, this alternative interpretation may account for earlier conceptualisations of Persephone as the sole, powerful ruler of the Underworld, rather than as a bereft mother, and this may also explain the description of her grief as being 'ancient'. Rose argues against this possibility as no mortals were involved in Persephone's rape narrative, and although a number of mortals were in fact involved in the overall story, their contact was all with Demeter. Thus, he says, 'no human soul could be expected to make requital to the goddess for what she underwent then'.<sup>107</sup> There has, however, been a move away from the 'traditional' Orphic interpretation of the Dionysos Zagreus myth argued notably by Edmonds,<sup>108</sup> Zuntz,<sup>109</sup> Linforth,<sup>110</sup> and Brisson.<sup>111</sup> It seems, as Edmonds points out, obvious that the Zagreus myth fits the model presented both in the 'Orphic' tablets and in this Pindaric fragment. However, as he also points out:

This myth of Zagreus provides a seductively simple and neat explanation of the cryptic gold tablet; it is unfortunately a modern creation that could not have been known to the "Orphics" of Timpone Piccolo. Indeed, I shall demonstrate that this Zagreus myth is, in fact, a modern fabrication dependent upon Christian models that reconstruct the fragmentary evidence in terms of a unified "Orphic" church, an almost Christian religion with dogma based on a central myth – specifically salvation from original sin though the death and resurrection of the suffering god.<sup>112</sup>

It is noteworthy that the term of servitude for the deceased is nine years. This is the term of banishment ascribed to both mortals and gods who have

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<sup>107</sup> H. J. Rose 1936: 85.

<sup>108</sup> Edmonds 1999, 2013: 305-06.

<sup>109</sup> Zuntz 1971.

<sup>110</sup> Linforth 1941. Although Linforth himself did not consider the gold lamellae as belonging to strict Orphic cult, choosing only to deal with material that directly named Orpheus.

<sup>111</sup> Brisson 1985, 1992, 1995.

<sup>112</sup> Edmonds 1999: 36. However, see also Bernabé 2002: 402. Bernabé strongly disagrees with Edmond's assertion.

committed 'a serious offence, homicide or, at least in the case of a god, perjury'.<sup>113</sup> One prominent example of this term being applied to the punishment of a god is the mythic case of Apollo's exile from Delphi to Thessaly following the murder of Python.<sup>114</sup> Either abduction and rape or murder would fit this type of punishment, so whether Persephone's own rape or the slaughter of her son were the cause of her grief, the term of punishment would be the same. In this case the exile is from the mortal world, rather than from the *polis*: the deceased serve out their period of banishment in death and, after some or all have completed the requisite time, they are returned to the mortal world and restored with life, just as the banished murderer would again be allowed to enter the *polis* and reclaim their possessions. The Persephone that is presented here is the goddess purely in her role as Queen of the Underworld, and she can not only change the condition of death but change the inevitable and eternal fate of death as well. Hades needs no mention as, even when he is a well-defined character and not merely blending into the scenery of the Underworld,<sup>115</sup> he is not a divinity who can bring about such a change.

There are similarities in the way Persephone is presented in this fragment and her characterisation in the so-called 'Orphic' gold lamellae, and there may be some connection between the fragment and the ritual activity associated with the gold lamellae. The Orphic gold lamellae are small, inscribed amulets that have been found in grave-burials throughout the Greek world,<sup>116</sup> and the earliest examples might be reasonably dated to the late fifth-century, although the majority of depositions appear to occur in the fourth and third centuries.<sup>117</sup> Early scholars of the tablets described them as belonging to some form of eschatological based, Orphic

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<sup>113</sup> H. J. Rose 1936: 89. cf. H.W Parke and Wormell 1956a: 8.

<sup>114</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 421c; Ael. *VH.* 3.1; Kall. *fr.* 81 (Trypanis). This is not the only instance of Apollo being exiled from Delphi for purification from bloodguilt. He was forced to serve a year in exile by Zeus for the killing of the Cyclops, ps-Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.10.4.

<sup>115</sup> As, for example, at Pind. *Pyth.* 5.96.

<sup>116</sup> Though it should be noted that there have been no tablets found in Attika, Boeotia, the eastern Peloponnese, the Cycladic islands, or Rhodes, and there is probably only one example of a table that may have been deposited in Asia Minor. Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004: 23.

<sup>117</sup> Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004: 23.

cult.<sup>118</sup> The link to 'Orphic' cult is through the mythological narratives that form the background of the tablets; that is, narratives involving the murder and eating of Zeus and Persephone's son, Dionysos Zagreus, and the expiation that man must pay to Persephone for this crime. We should be wary of using this mythic correlation to ascribe a uniform belief system to the owners and users of the gold lamellae as being 'Orphic' or members of an 'Orphic' cult or a particular, undeviating, 'mystery' cult. The term Orphic, according to Herrero de Jáuregui, 'tends to be said and understood, no matter how much one nuances it, as reflecting a sect or at least a uniform type of people holding similar ideas and practices'.<sup>119</sup> There are elements in the lamellae that appear to reflect earlier linguistic and stylistic nuances, perhaps even dating back to the Homeric poems,<sup>120</sup> and this hints at a long heritage for the content of the lamellae. The inscription style is also consistent with the evolution in other tablet-types. For example, the earliest curse tablets are found usually containing only names, and tablets become more and more complex in content the later they appear. It has been suggested that this 'extra' content represents material that was still being used in the case of the earlier tablets, but represents something that would have been spoken, rather than inscribed, as the tablet was being prepared or buried.<sup>121</sup> Persephone appears on a curse tablet with Hermes Chthonios in Tangara, Boiotia.<sup>122</sup> For this reason, we can use the tablets as evidence for earlier practices as long as one does so tentatively and with the knowledge that the tablets represent what is likely an evolution of earlier ideology.

### Persephone Cult in Lokroi

The Persephonean cult in the southern Italian settlement of Lokroi demonstrates how a mythic variant can bring two disparate mythic traditions together to create a

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<sup>118</sup> For example, A. Dietrich 1893: 84; J. E. Harrison 1903: 572-74. For a full study on the history of the scholarship of the gold lamellae, see Graf and Johnston 2013: 50-65.

<sup>119</sup> Herrero de Jáuregui 2011: 273.

<sup>120</sup> Eidinow 2007: 141.

<sup>121</sup> Eidinow 2007: 144.

<sup>122</sup> Audollent 1904: 81; Albert Schachter 1986: 200.

harmonious picture.<sup>123</sup> The Lokrian Persephone displays the goddess as an archetypical abducted maiden mixed with qualities of the agrarian goddess, and the goddess who is Queen of the Underworld, not just as Hades' subordinate consort but instead as a ruler of the dead in her own right.<sup>124</sup> The Persephonean cult was the major religious focus of the Lokrian *polis*,<sup>125</sup> and this is evident in the placement of Persephone's sanctuary as well as the archaeological finds in the city. Some of the most important and interesting objects are the terracotta pinakes, which I will discuss in greater detail below, but there are also quantities of terracotta figurines that, Zuntz argues, depict Persephone in the guise of a fertility or mother goddess, not unlike a young Demeter.<sup>126</sup> These statuettes do not hint at a 'chthonic' or death-related divinity; however there is a direct cultic link to this Underworld aspect in other areas of the same cult, and this is demonstrated very clearly in the pinakes.

These pinakes show depictions of Persephone's abduction by Hades, as well as examples that show other young men abducting young women apparently in imitation of the divine pair.<sup>127</sup> In addition to these 'abduction' scenes there are several image types that show nuptial offerings being given to Persephone and Hades,<sup>128</sup> types that present Aphrodite, and some that do not involve any figures but show only images of offerings,<sup>129</sup> reflecting the types of offerings made in the nuptial scenes. The pinakes are small, square terracotta plaques that do not exceed 30 centimetres on any side, and range from half a centimetre to two centimetres in thickness. Their fairly uniform size may be an indication that they were something

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<sup>123</sup> On the Lokrian Pinakes: Antonetti 1995; Currie 2002; Graf 2000; Hinz 1998: 203-09; Lissi Caronna et al. 1999, 2000-2003, 2004-2007; Prückner 1968; Quagliati 1908; Redfield 2003a; Sourvinou-Inwood 1973, 1974, 1978.

<sup>124</sup> For similar arguments see Redfield 2003a: 349; Sourvinou-Inwood 1978: 101.

<sup>125</sup> Zuntz 1971: 159-60.

<sup>126</sup> Zuntz 1971: 160-61.

<sup>127</sup> For examples see Orsi 1909: figs. 30-37. Orsi 1909: figs. 30-37.

<sup>128</sup> Orsi 1909: figs 5-12. These offerings are wedding offerings, meaning that these images are of Hades and Persephone as bride and groom receiving offerings during their wedding celebration, further informing the concept of this cult as a wedding or marriage related cult and Persephone as the marriage goddess *par excellence* in Lokroi. G. Ferrari 2003: 33.

<sup>129</sup> Orsi 1909: figs. 21-24. Orsi 1909: figs. 21-24.

of a modest or 'humble' offering; otherwise, we would expect to see various sizes of the offering catering to a number of different socio-economic class categories.<sup>130</sup>

The pinakes were found mainly at the sanctuary of Persephone, near Mannella, though a small number have been found elsewhere in the city.<sup>131</sup> This sanctuary is in close proximity to graves, other shrines of a reportedly 'chthonic' nature and the city's necropolis.<sup>132</sup> For the most part, they are dedicated to Persephone, who is the main figure of cultic worship at Lokroi. Some have been identified as having been dedicated to Aphrodite, who is a subordinate divinity in the Persephonean cult.<sup>133</sup> The pinakes offered to the two goddesses appear to be a unified whole, and not offerings to separate cults connected by a local style, showing that Aphrodite's presence within Persephone's cult is not accidental. The connection between the two goddesses is affection and fertility, and each goddess, alongside her consort, represents a different type of love within the context of the cult. Persephone, united with Hades in marriage, takes on the role of protector of marriage, fertility and the safe production of legitimate children. Aphrodite, with her lover Hermes, represents those types of love that do not directly benefit society – illicit and abhorrent forms of sexual pleasure, what Sourvinou-Inwood describes as 'love unconfined by institutions'.<sup>134</sup> Aphrodite's main function in the Persephonean cult is to ensure the enactment of the marriage between Persephone and Hades: the marriage of Life and Death.<sup>135</sup>

Although there are a number of different pinax types, two main types indicate Persephone's primary function here. The first are those that show Persephone's abduction, usually in a chariot pulled by winged horses, or those that show representations of young couples emulating Persephone's abduction.

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<sup>130</sup> Redfield 2003a: 352.

<sup>131</sup> Redfield 2003a: 346.

<sup>132</sup> Hadzisteliou Price 1978: 172.

<sup>133</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 151.

<sup>134</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1978: 120. This may, also, be connected to the erotic tendencies apparent in Lokrian poetry, see Zuntz 1971: 159.

<sup>135</sup> Zuntz 1971: 166.



Examples from this sub-latter type involve a young man, who is typically naked except for a cloak, abducting a maiden using a chariot, which may have winged or ordinary horses.<sup>136</sup> In both cases, the scenes range from straightforward abduction scenes in which the maiden struggles against her captor to images in which it appears as though the maiden is wholly complicit, sometimes even taking charge of the chariot herself. The identity of the young man has been greatly contested in scholarship, and identification has ranged from depictions of prematurely<sup>137</sup> dead girls being taken into the Underworld by Thanatos,<sup>138</sup> or a youthful Hades,<sup>139</sup> or Hermes,<sup>140</sup> or one of the Dioskouroi abducting Persephone on Hades' behalf,<sup>141</sup> or an indigenous local hero that was amalgamated into the Persephone and Hades abduction story due to their similarities.<sup>142</sup> That these do, in fact, represent a 'young abductor' acting in imitation of the god has been convincingly argued by Sourvinou-Inwood.<sup>143</sup> The second pinax type shows Persephone and Hades enthroned and include the connected sub-type depicting deities paying homage either to the enthroned pair or to Persephone alone.<sup>144</sup> These most likely represent gifts and tributes offered on the occasion of Persephone and Hades' marriage.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1973: 12.

<sup>137</sup> That is, before marriage. For further discussion of the 'special dead' see Introduction, and cf. Garland 1985: 77-103.

<sup>138</sup> Quagliati 1908: 158-59.

<sup>139</sup> Scheurleer 1932: 334.

<sup>140</sup> Richter 1949: 184-85.

<sup>141</sup> Zancani Montuoro 1955: 9-10.

<sup>142</sup> Prückner 1968: 73-74.

<sup>143</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1973.

<sup>144</sup> There may be a stylistic parallel between this type of pinax at Lokroi and the 'Chrysapha relief' found in Lakonia, in southern Greece. Like the pinakes showing Persephone and Hades enthroned, the Chrysapha relief depicts an enthroned male and female who are being offered dedication by smaller figures. The relief, likely representing heroised dead, includes a large amount of funerary iconography also found in the Lokrian pinakes. This includes a large snake rising up behind the seated couple, a pomegranate, a lotus flower, a hen and an egg. Berlin 731; Boardman 1999: fig. 253.

<sup>145</sup> Divinities offering homage include Hermes, Dionysos, Apollo, Triptolemos, the Dioskouroi and a female figure who is never represented alone but sometimes accompanies Hermes, Dionysos or the Dioskouroi. Zancani Montuoro and Sourvinou-Inwood identify this woman alternatively as Ariadne when appearing with Dionysos, Aphrodite with Hermes, and Helen with the Dioskouroi. See Sourvinou-Inwood 1978: 105-06; Zancani Montuoro 1955: 9-10.

The pinakes found at Lokroi differ in style and content to other comparable contemporary objects from the Greek world, although there has been a find of pinakes similar to those from Lokroi in nearby Francavilla, where at least one object originates from Lokroi. Most of the Francavillan pinakes were locally produced and, although bearing resemblance to those from Lokroi, they are not identical. One striking Francavillan pinax illustrates what appears to be the abduction of Helen by Paris, showing Aphrodite steering the ship that the couple are boarding. Given that many of the pinakes from Lokroi depict scenes of abduction and that Aphrodite played a role of some kind in Lokrian religious life we may deduce that this Francavillan pinax is related in some way. It is unlikely, however, that this indicates cultic dissemination from one location to the other, as the Lokrian abduction scenes are all offerings made to Persephone, and the Francavillan scene clearly depicts a scene that is a part of the mythic profile of Aphrodite.<sup>146</sup>

Despite some differences, there is a connection with other types of abduction scenes found throughout the Greek world, those that Sourvinou-Inwood labels as 'erotic pursuit' scenes.<sup>147</sup> The main difference between the Lokrian abductions scenes and erotic pursuit scenes are the protagonists. In many other examples the main abductor is Theseus,<sup>148</sup> although there are also unidentified youths similar to those found on the Lokrian examples. It is usual for these youths to be carrying spears, whereas the Lokrian examples do not have this feature. In many of the non-Lokrian examples either the pursued maiden or, sometimes, the youth carry a flower, and Sourvinou-Inwood concludes that 'this flower refers to the motif of the girls' flower-gathering just before the abduction, and this is connected with the theme of abduction and through it also with marriage'.<sup>149</sup> There is no mention here of Persephone, but the flower-gathering motif is clearly an aspect of her abduction

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<sup>146</sup> Redfield 2003a: 352.

<sup>147</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 59.

<sup>148</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 60. These are, also, connected to another type of pursuit scene which always involves Theseus pursuing a woman. See Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 29-57.

<sup>149</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 65.

myth, and this forms the ultimate connection with marriage. Lokrian abduction scenes also include strings of flowers being held by the maiden. The Lokrian types do not, however, include 'grabbing' motifs, which are present in non-Lokrian abduction scenes, and have a stronger connotation of violence than is present at Lokroi.

The pinakes were most likely dedications made to the goddess by young girls on the occasion of their own weddings and served the function of seeking marital protection from Persephone.<sup>150</sup> In this local context, Persephone performs the function of protector of marriage and weddings, which is elsewhere performed by Hera.<sup>151</sup> The pinakes as marriage-related offerings may help to explain the inconsistent depictions of abduction shown in the 'young abductor' pinakes, where some brides are more complicit in their capture than others. This may be because, as Redfield comments, 'no doubt some brides felt more abducted than others'.<sup>152</sup> Most of the 'young abductor' depictions show a middle ground where the maiden is neither wholly cooperative, nor represented as feeling forcibly torn away from her family. In these 'middle-ground' depictions, the young bride is represented as a captive, while being simultaneously shown with a softness and adoration for her abductor-lover. While these pinakes are usually considered as presenting an image of the young girl and her fiancé, they have been alternatively described as showing

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<sup>150</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1973: 18. For the pinakes being primarily dedicated by women, see also Redfield 2003a: 252-53.

<sup>151</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 153.

<sup>152</sup> Redfield 2003a: 357. Related to this, and on the subject of Persephone's own abduction-marriage in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*:

'That [Persephone's] marriage is presented as a rape, although ultimately sanctioned by the will of Zeus, reveals for us an important psychological reality for ancient Greek women. We cannot ignore the prominence given to the subject of rape in Greek myth generally, nor should we forget that in antiquity the marriage ritual was essentially a formalized rape, or abduction, in which the groom carries off the bride, the bride presents to struggle, mock battles ensue between the attendance, and the bride's family makes demonstrations of grief'. Brumfield 1981: 225.

images of Persephone being abducted by Eubouleus,<sup>153</sup> rather than Hades. This is unlikely; the young abductors here appear iconographically different from Eleusinian representation of Eubouleus,<sup>154</sup> and there is no reason for the young Eleusinian god to appear in this Southern Italian cult. The cult – and manifestation of Persephone as a protector of marriage – appears to be entirely local to Lokroi, and there is no evidence that people came from outside Lokroi to make marriage-related dedications to Lokrian Persephone.<sup>155</sup>

The ‘abduction’ pinakes are representative of the early stages of marriage rituals, whether that is the idealised divine marriage of Persephone to Hades or that of a young maiden to her youthful abductor-lover. Abduction, or mock-abduction, forms a part of marriage rituals both in myth, as in the case of Persephone, and in marriage rituals documented elsewhere in the Greek world.<sup>156</sup> That these dedications are marriage related is only made clearer by the homage or dedication pinakes showing Persephone and Hades as a bridal couple. There is also a demonstrable element of death-related mythology implied not only by the choice of divinities which are shown and emulated, but also by the choice of abduction as the moment of courting which is imitated. That Persephone is depicted here in her guise as Queen of the Underworld may have informed earlier interpretations of the Lokrian pinakes as showing dead maidens being driven into the Underworld,<sup>157</sup> rather than young women participating in a pre-marriage ritual. There is no evidence that a mock-abduction occurred in marriage rituals here, although this is irrelevant; rites-of-passage were often conceived of as being a symbolic ‘death and rebirth’<sup>158</sup> and, in the context of marriage rites, Persephone’s narrative is the perfect

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<sup>153</sup> Bonnechere 2003: 181; Clinton 1988: 76, 1992: 56-63, 1993: 115-16; B. C. Dietrich 1982: 450; Kerényi 1967: 44.

<sup>154</sup> Clinton 1992: 73.

<sup>155</sup> Redfield 2003a: 353.

<sup>156</sup> In Sparta, for example, where Plutarch relates: ἐγάμουν δὲ δι’ ἄρπαγῆς, οὐ μικρὰς οὐδὲ ἁώρους πρὸς γάμον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀκμαζούσας καὶ πεπείρους. (‘For their marriages the women were carried off by force, not when they were small and unfit for wedlock, but when they were in full bloom and wholly ripe’). Plut. *Lyk.* 15.3. cf. Avagianou 1991: 116.

<sup>157</sup> Bianchi 1976: 12.

<sup>158</sup> See appendix three.

archetype for this. As a part of her own marriage she – very literally – goes down into the Underworld and when she returns to the mortal world she has the new status of wife. Following this pattern, the pinakes dedicated showing scenes imitating this divine abduction do not need to be an illustration of a real ritual act that occurs during the marriage process. Rather, these are more suited to being a visualisation of the metaphorical narrative in which young maidens were taken into the Underworld by their own abductor-lover, rather than Hades, in order to be reborn with their new statuses as wives. What makes Persephone's marriage to Hades ideal here, even while we acknowledge the abduction aspect of their mythological heritage, is this combination of death- and life-related imagery. Persephone is the perfect figure for emulation for young girls embarking on marriage; the separation from her family provided by the abduction and Underworld aspects coupled with the fecundity of Persephone's agrarian aspects, ensuring that Lokrian girls will be well placed to populate the citizen body.

The pinakes often show the divine couple holding stalks of grain and twigs.<sup>159</sup> The stalk of grain is regularly associated with Persephone as the daughter of Demeter,<sup>160</sup> and should be viewed as strictly agrarian iconography. However, we should not consider this aspect, which Persephonean cults throughout the Greek world exhibit, to be more important in the Lokrian cult than her role as a divinity who protects young brides and marriage. This is one of Lokrian Persephone's principle attributes, and so it cannot be ignored, particularly with the frequent inclusion of her husband Hades, both in the abduction and the marriage scenes. Above all, she is a dutiful wife who is imitated by young maidens approaching marriage.

One characteristic of the Lokrian cult is the prominent role that Hades plays. In other cults that might be aetiologically related to Persephone's abduction and rape myth, such as the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Thesmophoria, the main ritual

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<sup>159</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1973: 18.

<sup>160</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1978: 108.

component relates to the loss and discovery of Persephone, and there is little focus on the act of abduction or marriage and no 'enactment' of the Underworld scenes. The agrarian element is represented by Demeter's joy at the discovery of her daughter and by lifting the barrenness that she has cast over the land. There is no indication that the fertility aspect could be represented by the marriage union of Persephone and Hades. At Lokroi, however, the act of abduction and the marriage of the divine pair form the major mythic aspects of the cult. Therefore, Persephone takes over the realms of fertility, agriculture and marriage that were traditionally attributed to Demeter, the Greek fertility goddess *par excellence*, and Hera the archetype of the divine wife. Elsewhere, Hades is referred to as the Zeus of the Underworld,<sup>161</sup> ruling over the souls of the dead as his brother rules over the living. Persephone, then, undertakes the final transition from maiden to wife and her mother's domination over her is lost, as young girls on the cusp of womanhood leave their familial homes for that of their new husband, and in doing so take on the role that their mother's played in that family homes. At Lokroi Persephone truly becomes queen of the Underworld, unlike at Eleusis, where she undoubtedly does not take on this role.

Lokrian Persephone does not need a staged return like that at Eleusis; she does not require intervention from the other gods. Here, almost alone of all cult throughout the Greek world, Persephone is the commander – of both the living *polis*, and the netherworld. She is Queen of life and fertility and also Queen of death.

### Brides of Hades

The tradition of girls acting, or at least pretending to act, in imitation of Persephone is not unique to Lokroi. There are numerous examples of mythic maidens acting in imitation of the goddess in her guise as wife of Hades in contemporary ancient

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<sup>161</sup> Burkert 1985: 196. Also see chapter three, 'Hades in Homer and Hesiod'.

literature.<sup>162</sup> Following their premature and often tragic deaths, these girls are subsequently referred to as wives of Hades, as having married death, or married into death, and there are many examples of girls or choruses describing deaths as marriages.<sup>163</sup> All these girls, who describe themselves or are described as marrying death or marrying Hades, are engaging with the mythic abduction and marriage of Persephone. As Janakieva comments, they 'ont visiblement le sort de Perséphone, le modèle mythologique classique de la jeune fille enlevée par Hadès, dont la descente dans le royaume souterrain (équivalente à la mort) est en fait son mariage' ('obviously have the fate of Persephone, the classic mythological model of the girl abducted by Hades, whose descent into the Underworld (equivalent to death) is actually her wedding').<sup>164</sup> Death and marriage rites are similar in many ways, and are often connected by a typological motif of separation and union. Common elements between the two include purification, anointing oil, fragrant clothing, driving the girl either to the wedding or the gravesite, procession, banquet, speech, and the use of wreaths and torches.<sup>165</sup>

In the second century CE, Artemidoros made the connection between marriage and death rituals clear in his *Oneirocritica*, stating that the dreaming of marriage foretells the dreamer's death because of the similarity between the rites and the shared icons used in the rituals.<sup>166</sup> Funerary epitaphs explain that young unmarried girls have not yet heard wedding songs nor experienced married life. They may also include references to these young girls being abducted by Hades, and as Janakieva says, 'leur mort est présentée comme une union avec Hadès ou l'Achéron, leur tombe comme une chambre nuptiale' ('their death is presented as a

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<sup>162</sup> Although we must remember that while there are many examples of death being presented as a marriage, there are no examples of marriages being presented as deaths – accordingly, this is not a 'two-way' topos but a metaphor of death. The death-as-marriage is, also, significantly more indicative of a traditional 'rite of passage' than the marriage, because of its irreversible nature. See G. Ferrari 2003: 36.

<sup>163</sup> see below for some examples, and Janakieva 2005: 7.

<sup>164</sup> Janakieva 2005: 8.

<sup>165</sup> G. Ferrari 2003: 27; Janakieva 2005: 6. Also see Avagianou 1991: 3-18; Garland 1985: 21-37.

<sup>166</sup> Artem. 2.49.

union with Hades or the Acheron, their graves as a bridal chamber').<sup>167</sup> Images often show the deceased maiden at the moment of the bride's unveiling.<sup>168</sup> Iphigeneia provides a typical case study for the motif of the 'Bride of Hades', although there are a number of other overt examples in the literary sources from the classical period.

Both Aischylos and Euripides refer to Iphigeneia's sacrifice to bloodthirsty Artemis at Aulis, by her father Agamemnon. Although little is said of the background in Aischylos' *Agamemnon*,<sup>169</sup> Euripides explains that Iphigeneia was lured to Aulis under the ruse of marriage to the great warrior, Achilles.<sup>170</sup> Later, she is described as having found a husband in Hades rather than the hero.<sup>171</sup> The pretence of marriage to Achilles ensures that Iphigeneia undertakes normal ritual preparations carried out by any young maiden readying herself for marriage, but her ritual preparation only serves to highlight her impending death and subsequent marriage to Hades. Iphigeneia's mock-marriage and death provides a mythic example the rite-of-passage that each young Greek girl undergoes. Where Iphigeneia dies and is transformed into a bride through death, the young girl symbolically 'dies' and she is then 'reborn' as a married woman.

Antigone is another example of this mythic motif in classical tragedy. She is entombed alive by her uncle,<sup>172</sup> Kreon, for her attempt to undertake funerary rites for to her dead brother, Polyneikes. Of his niece's impending death, Kreon says that "Αἰδης ὁ παύσων τοῦσδε τοὺς γάμους ἔφω ('Hades will bring an end to this wedding for me').<sup>173</sup> Kreon had forbidden Polynikes' burial, by way of public edict, and stated that anyone caught burying him would be subject to death by public

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<sup>167</sup> Janakieva 2005: 6. See for example Peek 1955: 658, 1162, 238, 551, 553, 989..

<sup>168</sup> G. Ferrari 2003: 35.

<sup>169</sup> Aisch. *Ag.* 201-247. Aischylos did deal specifically with this myth in the now-lost *Iphigeneia*, which may have commented on this aspect.

<sup>170</sup> Eur. *IA*, 100.

<sup>171</sup> Eur. *IA* 460-462; *IT*. 369.

<sup>172</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 883-890. Kreon does not kill Antigone, he rather buries her alive; sentencing her to a 'living death' see Butler 2000: 27.

<sup>173</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 575.



stoning.<sup>174</sup> But Antigone recognises her brother's burial as her familial duty, and feels that leaving him unburied would contravene the law of the gods.<sup>175</sup> Her struggle to complete proper funerary rites for Polynikes draws attention, when the time comes, to her own improper burial and lack of funerary ritual. This is particularly enhanced by the outcome of Antigone's first burial is, which is ritually successful in the eyes of the gods.<sup>176</sup> Antigone's betrothed husband, Kreon's son Haimon, sacrifices himself in protest of her condemnation, so Antigone, now a bride without a mortal bridegroom, declares that Ἀχέροντι νυμφεύσω ('The lord of Acheron will be my groom'),<sup>177</sup> and refers to her tomb as a νυμφεῖον ('bridal chamber').<sup>178</sup> Butler explains Antigone's first speech as indicating that she is, in fact, marrying into her own family – either her brother Polynikes or her father-brother Oidipous:

ὦ τύμβος, ὦ νυμφεῖον, ὦ κατασκαφῆς  
οἴκησις ἀείφρουρος, οἱ πορεύομαι  
πρὸς τοὺς ἐμαυτῆς

O tomb, O bridal chamber, O deep-dug home, to be guarded for  
ever, where I go to join those who are my own.<sup>179</sup>

'Thus', Butler says, 'death is figured as a kind of marriage to those in her family who are already dead'.<sup>180</sup> Similarly, we can note that Eurydice comments that Antigone goes on to marry Haimon, her betrothed in life, in the Underworld:

κεῖται δὲ νεκρὸς περὶ νεκρῷ, τὰ νυμφικὰ  
τέλη λαχὼν δειλαιοὶ εἰν Ἄιδου δόμοις.

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<sup>174</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 31-36, 197-210.

<sup>175</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 45-470.

<sup>176</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 245-247. See also Held 1983: 193; J. L. Rose 1952: 219. For a general overview of the issues present here see Margon 1972: 39-49.

<sup>177</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 815.

<sup>178</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 891.

<sup>179</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 891-893. trans. Butler

<sup>180</sup> Butler 2000: 23-24.

He lay, corpse enfolding corpse, having won his marriage rites, poor boy, not here, but in the house of Hades.<sup>181</sup>

Kreon's initial edict included a throwaway reference to Antigone finding a husband in Hades, rather than marrying Hades herself.<sup>182</sup> Even if we take this reading, which must be alongside Antigone's own blatant referral to her marriage to Hades, we find the young maiden marrying a 'chthonic' individual, in this case a ghost or shade, and therefore the outcome is similar.

The honour of being Hades' bride may even be extended to Polyxena who is sacrificed over the grave of Achilles, to be his wife in the Underworld.<sup>183</sup> Unlike Iphigeneia and Antigone, she is never represented as being made the bride of the god of the Underworld. However, the manner in which her sacrifice is carried out mimics that of the 'reversed wedding' demonstrated in other mythic Brides of Hades.<sup>184</sup> There is also an obvious parallel between Iphigeneia's false groom and Polyxena's intended husband, Achilles; although, the obvious difference between the two cases is that the hero was living when promised to Iphigeneia and already dead when Polyxena was intended to be his bride. This fact, however, can provide an answer to the troubling question of Polyxena's intention for the ruler of the Underworld, as Odysseus, when meeting Achilles in the Underworld describes him as a μέγα κρατέεις νεκύεσσιν ('great ruler among the dead').<sup>185</sup> Strikingly, in Euripides' *Hekabe*, which represents the fullest extant version of Polyxena's death, she is described as having lost her virginity, even though she has entered death without the experience of marriage in life<sup>186</sup> and despite not being united with Achilles in her death.<sup>187</sup> She herself recognises the inevitability of her union with

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<sup>181</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 1240-1241.

<sup>182</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 654; cf. G. Ferrari 2003: 37.

<sup>183</sup> Eur. *Hec.* 40-44, 189-190.

<sup>184</sup> Loraux 1987: 37.

<sup>185</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.485.

<sup>186</sup> Eur. *Hec.* 416.

<sup>187</sup> Eur. *Hec.* 612; cf. Loraux 1987: 39, 40-41.

Hades when she comments that she is being sacrificed for the god.<sup>188</sup> Alongside this, Neoptolemos is described as having led Polyxena to her graveside by the wrist,<sup>189</sup> a gesture used in marriage rituals<sup>190</sup> which was, as Bremmer comments, 'a sign of taking possession of someone'.<sup>191</sup> Neoptolemos, the son of her intended husband, is leading her, as a bride to her bridal chamber turned tomb. In Euripides, Polyxena bravely offers her own neck, willing no man to touch her,<sup>192</sup> although the custom for sacrifices – and how her death is often depicted on vase paintings, in other artistic representations<sup>193</sup> and in Aischylos' *Agamemnon*<sup>194</sup> – is for the victim to be held aloft by ephebes.<sup>195</sup> One clear parallel between Polyxena's and Persephone's stories is the figurative loss of virginity. Polyxena, therefore presents a case that may provide a bridge to assist us to navigate a link between the mythic 'Brides of Hades' and the ritual custom of treating girls who have died prematurely as brides. As Polyxena is described as having lost her virginity, so we may image that young girls buried in their wedding attire may have been thought of as having undergone a loss of virginity as this was an important aspect of the transition from girl to wife.

The practical application of this mythic motif may also be seen within the classical practice of burying young, unmarried maidens wearing a wedding dress

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<sup>188</sup> Eur. *Hec.* 207-210.

<sup>189</sup> Eur. *Hec.* 523.

<sup>190</sup> This is a feature of wedding iconography in vase paintings from the archaic and classical periods, usually shown as the bridegroom leading the bride by the wrist. 'Early classical vases tend to portray a fairly realistic scene from one moment in the ceremony. The wedding procession remains very popular, but it now mainly on foot, the *chamaipous* procession. The groom seizes either the hand or wrist of his bride to lead her away. Often he turns back to look at her, creating an emotional contact between the two that brings a romantic mood to these scenes'. (Oakley and Sinos 1993: 45.) Examples can be seen in Oakley and Sinos' figures, particularly: fig. 86, an Attic red-figure *skyphos* by Makron (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 13.186), which depicts Paris leading Helen by the wrist; fig. 87, an Attic red-figure *calyx-krater* by the Painter of the Athens Weddings (Athens, National Museum 188) which shows a bridegroom leading a bride.

<sup>191</sup> Bremmer 2007: 62.

<sup>192</sup> Eur. *Hec.* 548-549.

<sup>193</sup> See, for example, the sarcophagus of Polyxena at Gümüşçay from c. 520-500, see Sevinç 1996: 255-58, figs. 6, 9, 10b.

<sup>194</sup> Aisch. *Ag.* 231-237.

<sup>195</sup> Bremmer 2007: 63-64.

and with grave goods resembling wedding-related offerings.<sup>196</sup> The figurative connection made here between marriage and death may seem more understandable should Hades be more like his younger brother and serial philanderer Zeus, but he appears to remain faithful to Persephone.<sup>197</sup> A brief examination of some examples of grave markers which depict girls who have died young and unmarried we may see that they, too, play on the assertion that these girls were to become Hades' brides. For example, the epigram on the *kore* statue used as a grave marker for a girl named Phrasikleia makes it clear that she died unmarried and that this gave her a special status in death.<sup>198</sup> In these cases, however, the young girl is not portrayed as a bride of Hades separate from Persephone, but rather is presented as the metaphorical image of Persephone.<sup>199</sup> Thus, we may be able to draw out a parallel in literary 'brides of Hades' as well. There is one other literary example for the precedence of young maidens on the precipice of marriage being handed over to the Underworld that occurs in Homer's *Odyssey*. In this episode girls who were being prepared for marriage by Artemis were snatched away by the Harpyiai, and taken by them to the Erinyes to ἀμφιπολεύειν ('take care of').<sup>200</sup> Although, unlike the maidens in tragedy, these brides are not represented as 'marrying' Hades or death, they still present a clear link between the marriage rite-of-passage and death.<sup>201</sup>

These prematurely dead girls, like those presented on the Lokrian pinakes, are being depicted, in their own deaths, in the guise of Persephone – though not the powerful Queen of the Underworld, but more like the helpless *korai* who are snatched away by death. They are not granted the honours of Persephone in the

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<sup>196</sup> Garland 1985: 97.

<sup>197</sup> Faithfulness to Persephone is an aspect of Hades that remains consistent throughout his variations, or, more accurately, there is no strong evidence that he ever takes other lovers – at least in the archaic and early classical periods. That (many) other gods do so provides enough evidence that the concept is not unusual, and that the Greeks (whoever those Greeks might be) have no fundamental problem with the philandering ways of their divinities. cf. Guthrie 1955: 55.

<sup>198</sup> *JG I* 3 1261. cf. *ThesCRA* add. to VI; vol. VII, sec. 13.1, 379.

<sup>199</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 249-52.

<sup>200</sup> Hom. *Od.* 20.75-78.

<sup>201</sup> For a further discussion on this, see Johnston 1994.

Underworld, they are not to become queen and they cannot control the fate of the dead. That is, these girls are acting in imitation of Persephone but cannot take her place. There is no reason why this may not be presented as a literary trope as well. Examples from death-related ritual practice in the real world may reflect a belief that the girls of our mythic examples were also merely acting in imitation of the goddess, rather than displacing her position as Hades' bride. Young women who were buried with bridal objects and iconography were probably not being offered to Hades in marriage by their parents, that is death as a 'substitute' for marriage, rather the form of burial can be read as a way of giving these girls the opportunity to undergo an experience that defines the life of a woman.<sup>202</sup> Mythic variants of ritual practice often present protagonists in ways that they are not presented in the real world; the mythologised versions are overextensions of the practical rituals and beliefs. For example, mythic *pharmakoi*, are often kings or beautiful maidens; they are always individuals who have a high standing in society. In practical ritual, however, those chosen to be *pharmakoi* are often criminals or the particularly ugly or disliked, in other words those who have a very low standing in society.<sup>203</sup> The difference in the case of girls who have died before marriage, however, is not their position in society during life but, rather, their perceived position in the Underworld after death; the girls are not described as being Hades' bride in the same fashion that these mythic figures are in literature.

### Conclusion

In this chapter we have looked at several different guises of Persephone, from her role in early literature to the Lokrian cult in which she takes on the mantle of protector of marriage. I first examined Persephone's role in modern scholarship, in which the goddess is often equated with Kore, usually with no further discussion. Following this, the chapter looked at the role Persephone played in Homeric and

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<sup>202</sup> Vermeule 1979: 55-56.

<sup>203</sup> Bremmer 1983: 301, 02, 03-07; Versnel 1990: 53.

Hesiodic texts. What I found was that there was no 'aggrieved abducted maiden' in Homer, and in the Homeric poems Persephone was only presented in her guise as Queen of the Underworld alongside Hades. In Hesiod's works, while Persephone's abduction story was narrated, she was more closely aligned aspectually to the Underworld.

I then looked more closely at the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Thesmophoria, where I examined the role of the pomegranate in Persephonean myth and in a wider mythic and cultic context, including their use in magic love spells. I argued that Hades' feeding Persephone a pomegranate seed in the Homeric hymn was such a love spell, and this accounted for the goddess' feeling of violation. I also found evidence in the Homeric hymn of a representation of the goddess as a divinity who could alter the fixed state of death for the deceased in her charge. This aspect was mirrored in the Pindar fragment that had overtones of the 'Orphic' gold lamellae. This passage also revealed a challenge to the assumption that the dead did not worship, or that the gods of the dead did not receive nor require worship, and we found evidence of both. This led the chapter to discuss 'Orphic' Persephone and where the goddess is represented as a leader of the dead in her own right, without reference to Hades as her consort.

Following this, the discussion moved to the Persephone cult at Lokroi, where young girls dedicated pinakes depicting either Persephone's abduction by Hades or imitation abductions of young maidens by youthful abductor-lovers. The Persephone of the Lokrian cult is the goddess in both her aspect as Queen of the Underworld and also with her agrarian guise, a meld of the two dominant personalities of Persephone. This serves to highlight the marriage aspect of the cult. There are very few cultic instances of Persephone being worshiped as Queen of the Underworld, and one of the most striking examples is the cult at Lokroi. The girls dedicating these pinakes emulate the goddess who underwent death-like separation from her family and were reborn, causing the earth to bud up with fertility. Thus, these girls were calling on Persephone to bless them with fertility in their marriages.

This led us to the discussion of Brides of Hades in tragedy and in burials in classical Athens of young girls who had not yet married. In tragedy, these girls were often directly called 'Brides of Hades', or references were made to them having married Hades or death. In the Athenian funerary context, girls were buried with wedding gifts and clothing, and we found reference to these girls being brides of death.

More generally, Persephone equally takes the aspect of aggrieved victim and outright Queen of the Underworld. Although in later representations of the Underworld, particularly in iconographic depictions on vases, she appears to usually be subservient to either Demeter (as in images of Eleusis, for example) or Hades. In early literature, particularly in the *Odyssey* and Pindar, we find a goddess who is sole ruler, or at the very least an equal co-monarch, of the deceased. Persephone has a much more significant role in the 'lives' of the dead, and often has the ability to affect the condition of death for her charges.

## 5: Demeter, Giver of Life

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'For all her connections to the Underworld', Burkert comments, 'Demeter is not simply the earth'.<sup>1</sup> Demeter might mythically control the outcome of the earth's fertility,<sup>2</sup> but even within this sphere her capacity for negativity towards mankind is unquestionable. Still, Demetrian worship was a central aspect of society throughout the Greek world, although the connection between the goddess and the *polis* was not always explicitly stated.<sup>3</sup> What tied the worship of Demeter to the propagation of the city and its citizens was agriculture.<sup>4</sup> Etymologically, Demeter's name is said to come from an amalgam of μήτηρ ('mother') and δᾶ, a supposed 'pre-Greek' word for 'earth'. There is, however, no evidence for this pre-Greek etymology of 'earth' and all attempts at arriving at a suitable etymological heritage for Demeter have proved fruitless.<sup>5</sup> Although there is no explicit etymological legacy there is, nevertheless, a strong connection between Demeter and the earth, and also with the wellbeing of the city, through her agrarian aspects. Parker explains this implicit association between the goddess and civilisation by identifying bread as being symbolic of the 'civilised diet, whether contrasted with a rough earlier diet of acorns and thistles or a brutal one of human flesh. The 'milled life', ὀλλεσμένοιο βίος (that is, life using ground corn) was a proverbial expression for the easy, comfortable life.'<sup>6</sup> This 'civilised diet' signified the civility of the *polis*, and Demeter's gift of agriculture, and the expression indicated that before this time there was an 'earlier diet' that was not refined because the *polis* had not been given the gift of agriculture. We

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<sup>1</sup> Burkert 1985: 159.

<sup>2</sup> There are, for example, numerous examples of Demeter casting barrenness across the earth. The most well-known of this is, arguably, the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* (305-13).

<sup>3</sup> Bremmer 2012: 26; Parker 2005b: 280.

<sup>4</sup> Cole 1994: 201.

<sup>5</sup> Beekes 2010: 324-25. Although this is the case for the majority of divinities, cf. Burkert 1985: 159.

<sup>6</sup> Parker 2005b: 280.



shall see this later in this chapter in a discussion on an oracular response from Delphi regarding the cult of Demeter at Phigaleia.

Demeter was, first and foremost, a goddess of agriculture, and agriculture was deeply connected to the life and death of the city and its populace. Sanctuaries to Demeter occur throughout the Greek world, and are particularly popular in locations that had a particular affinity for agricultural practices.<sup>7</sup> As with all Greek divinities, she has both beneficial and harmful characteristics. While being praised as a giver of life, grain, fruit, and abundance, she was also worshiped in association with the potential barrenness that she could inflict upon the earth. In Phokis, for example, she was worshiped with the epithet Στιρίτιδος or 'barren'.<sup>8</sup> In other places she is known with epithets such as Χθονία ('Chthonic'/'Underworld'), Μέλαινα ('Black'), and Ερινύς ('Erinyes'/'Fury'). As we shall see further in this chapter, the Erinyes were goddesses of vengeance, agents of death who dwelt in the Underworld and Demeter's association with them may hint at a stronger connection between the agrarian goddess and the Underworld. And, we can find evidence for this connection even though the majority of dedications to Demeter are centred on dedicants gaining agrarian favour.

### Demeter in Modern Scholarship

The majority of modern scholarship involving Demeter is devoted to either the Eleusinian Mysteries<sup>9</sup> (including large sections in many works on mystery cults more generally)<sup>10</sup> or the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*.<sup>11</sup> These include several different methods of reading text, including Suter's archaeological approach in *The Narcissus and the Pomegranate: An Archaeology of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter*,<sup>12</sup> and the

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<sup>7</sup> Cole 1994: 201.

<sup>8</sup> Paus. 10.35.10; cf. Cole 1994: 202.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, Cavanaugh 1996; Clinton 1974, 1988, 1992, 1993; B. C. Dietrich 1982; Evans 2002; Foucart 1914; Graf 1974; Janda 2000; Keller 1988; Kourouniotes 1936; Mylonas 1961; Robertson 1998; Travlos 1973; Wasson et al. 1998.

<sup>10</sup> Bowden 2010: 26-48; Burkert 1987; Kloft 1999: 17-24.

<sup>11</sup> For example, Alderink 1982; Clinton 1986; Foley 1994; Parker 1991; Richardson 1974.

<sup>12</sup> Suter 2002.

more cult-centred approach of Walton's 'Athens, Eleusis, and the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*'.<sup>13</sup> Much of the rest are works that address individual Demetrian cults, including cults of Demeter and Kore or Persephone. There are a large number of volumes that focus on the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in Corinth,<sup>14</sup> including a large collection of excavation reports from the site.<sup>15</sup> There is some scholarship relating to Demeter in literature other than the Homeric hymn, and these are mostly centred on the hymns of Lasos and Philikos<sup>16</sup> which will be discussed in greater detail below.

As I noted in Chapter four above, the majority of Burkert's section dealing with Demeter actually discusses Persephone, leaving the impression that Demeter is less important than her daughter. Persephone's rape and abduction narrative is certainly important in 'traditional' understandings of seasonal aetiology, and this has been significant in understanding Demeter in her capacity as an agrarian divinity. Demeter does feature prominently in this role in non-Mystery related scholarship including, for example, Cole's 'Demeter in the Ancient Greek City and its Countryside',<sup>17</sup> and Brumfield's *The Attic Festivals of Demeter and Their Relation to the Agricultural Year*.<sup>18</sup> This chapter examines the interrelationship between cultic practices within the city limits and out in the countryside, and although Eleusis is mentioned briefly in a cultic context this is not the main argument of the paper, which is more to do with the placement and displacement of country or city cults in a wider context, using Demetrian cults as an example.

There is no clear exposition of Demeter as a chthonic divinity, although there are several articles which particularly deal with the cult of Demeter Chthonia,

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<sup>13</sup> Walton 1952.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Anderson-Stojanović 2002; Bookidis and Stroud 1987.

<sup>15</sup> Including: Bookidis and Stroud 1987, 1997; Bookidis 2010; Merker 2000; Pemberton 1989.

<sup>16</sup> F. Ferrari and Prauscello 2007a; Körte 1931; Prauscello 2011, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Cole 1994.

<sup>18</sup> Brumfield 1981.

including those related to the literary evidence,<sup>19</sup> and Johnston's article detailing the evidence for the cult.<sup>20</sup>

### Demeter in Homer and Hesiod

Homer says little about Demeter. She is mentioned on five occasions in the *Iliad*, and only once in the *Odyssey*,<sup>21</sup> and none of these instances tell us anything specific about her nature. In the *Iliad* she is presented only as an agrarian goddess in charge of grain and its end products, most specifically bread: for example two of the five instances are related to Δημήτερος ἄκτῆν ('Demeter's yield')<sup>22</sup>. Her only appearance in the *Odyssey* is in relation to a sexual relationship she has with a mortal who is killed by Zeus' lightning bolt, which is recounted during Kalypso's argument against Hermes' request that she allow Odysseus to travel home. Homer says nothing of the relationship between Demeter and Persephone.

Demeter's three appearances in Hesiod's *Theogony* centre on her place in the pantheon of gods. The first of these relates her birth story, along with that of the other Olympian gods.<sup>23</sup> The second is to the conception and birth of Persephone.<sup>24</sup> The final mention refers to the birth of Ploutos,<sup>25</sup> who is, in this context, a demigod and child of Demeter and Iasion.<sup>26</sup> As we might expect from the subject matter, Demeter has a bigger role to play in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, a text that is largely concerned with agriculture. The poet urges his brother Perses to undertake agrarian tasks at the right time of the year by using Demetrian expressions. For example:

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<sup>19</sup> F. Ferrari and Prauscello 2007a; Prauscello 2011, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Johnston 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Hom. *Il.* 2.969, 5.500, 13.322, 14.326, 21.76; *Od.* 5.92.

<sup>22</sup> Hom. *Il.* 12.322, 21.76.

<sup>23</sup> Hes. *Th.* 454.

<sup>24</sup> Hes. *Th.* 912-913.

<sup>25</sup> M. L. West 1966: 422.

<sup>26</sup> Hes. *Th.* 969. cf. Diod. 5.48.2, Hyginus *Astronomica* 2.4. (where Ploutos is twin brother of Philomelos).

ἔργα κομίζεσθαι Δημήτερος, ὥς τοι ἕκαστα  
ῥρί' ἀέξεται, μή πως τὰ μέταζε χατίζων  
πτώσσης ἀλλοτρίου οἴκους καὶ μηδὲν ἀνύσσης.

If you want to do the work of Demeter in due season,  
So that each crop reaches its seasonal growth, lest hereafter,  
Being in want later, you go begging at others' houses and achieve  
nothing.<sup>27</sup>

She is given one specifically agrarian- or plenty-related epithet in the poem, which also occurs four times in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*: ἐϋστέφανος Δημήτηρ ('Demeter beautifully crowned').<sup>28</sup> Alongside this, the agricultural nature of the goddess is reinforced by one reference to Δημήτερος ἀκτὴν ('Demeter's grain')<sup>29</sup> and two references to Δημήτερος ἱερὸν ἀκτὴν ('Demeter's sacred grain').<sup>30</sup> One such example occurs in a distinctly Underworld context, in which the reader is urged to:

εὐχεσθαι δὲ Διὶ χθονίῳ Δημήτερί θ' ἀγνῇ  
ἐκτελέα βρίθειν Δημήτερος ἱερὸν ἀκτὴν,

Pray to Zeus Chthonios and holy Demeter  
To make Demeter's sacred grains to ripen heavy.<sup>31</sup>

Although, as we saw in the chapter dealing with Hades, 'Chthonian Zeus' was sometimes used as another name for the god of the Underworld, this is not the sense that is being portrayed here. The 'Zeus Chthonios' for Hades construction does not occur in Hesiod. The connection with a 'chthonic' aspect of Zeus and Demeter, does, however, bring to mind the statement from the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* regarding the goddess hiding seeds beneath the earth.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Hes. *WD.* 393-395.

<sup>28</sup> Hes. *WD.* 300; cf. h.Hom. *Dem.* 224, 308, 385, 471.

<sup>29</sup> Hes. *WD.* 300. cf. Hom. *Il.* 13.322, 21.76; Hes. *Sh.* 290.

<sup>30</sup> Hes. *WD.* 597, 805.

<sup>31</sup> Hes. *WD.* 465-466. Interestingly, Most translates Zeus Chthonios as 'Zeus of the land', emphasising the agrarian aspect of this sentiment.

<sup>32</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 354.

While this may give us a glimpse into the connection between agriculture and death, and therefore Demeter's role in both these spheres, it may also simply be a reference to the interconnected nature of the cycle of death and rebirth that is evidence in many Underworld- and death-related tropes and not a comment on any greater connection which Demeter has with the Underworld itself. Beyond the burying of seeds there is little to suggest, in the *Works and Days*, that Demeter has a strictly 'chthonic' function.

#### Demeter in the Homeric Hymn and at Eleusis

Persephone's abduction narrative may explain some of the initiatory rituals undertaken at Eleusis, although as we have seen, there is no direct or specific aetiological link between the hymn and any Demetrian ritual. The rituals from Eleusis are themselves reflected in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, and different portions of the story are embodied in various ritual elements.<sup>33</sup> These include Persephone's abduction,<sup>34</sup> Demeter's frantic search for her daughter,<sup>35</sup> Demeter revealing herself as a goddess to the people of Eleusis,<sup>36</sup> Persephone's return to the world of the living and the disclosure of her covert Underworld marriage.<sup>37</sup> In Eleusinian cult, however, Persephone is absent in name, and the goddess connected with Demeter here is Kore, the Maiden, and they are often referred to as 'the two goddesses'.<sup>38</sup>

The section of the hymn that deals directly with Eleusis occurs during Demeter's stay at the house of Keleos and Metaneira, whilst nursing their infant son Demophoon. Demeter's stay in Eleusis is an inversed imitation of her daughter's exile into the Underworld, as Demeter exiles herself from the world of the

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<sup>33</sup> See the discussion on the Homeric Hymn and the Eleusinian Mysteries in the Introduction and chapter two.

<sup>34</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 15-30.

<sup>35</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 47-50.

<sup>36</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 256-275.

<sup>37</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 371-372, 412.

<sup>38</sup> Clinton 1979: 5.

immortals.<sup>39</sup> This section of the poem breaks the narrative of the beginning and end, and seems disconnected from the whole, as noted specifically by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff,<sup>40</sup> Zuntz,<sup>41</sup> Richardson,<sup>42</sup> and Parker.<sup>43</sup>

This 'interlude' occurs after Helios' speech, when Demeter leaves Olympos in anger and travels to Eleusis, disguised as an old woman. The daughters of the Eleusinian king, Keleos, chance upon her sitting by a well and she tells them that she had been abducted by Kretan pirates and escaped. The concealed goddess enquires after work as a nursemaid, is told to visit several prominent Eleusinian men, including Triptolemos,<sup>44</sup> before they suggest that their own mother might provide employment. The maidens depart and quickly reappear with an invitation for the goddess to visit their home. Once there, Demeter 'gleams' through the doorway in divine radiance and then refuses the offer of the Queen's own couch to sit on. Instead the slave lambe brings a fleece-covered stool for her to sit on. Demeter does not eat or drink at first, sitting in silence, covered by her veil until lambe makes her laugh. Then she requests a drink of barley and water mixed with pennyroyal, which the hymn calls the *kykeon* – this later lends its name to the 'mix up' used in Eleusinian cultic practices. Metaneira offers Demeter the job of raising the infant Demophoon,<sup>45</sup> offering her rich rewards for nurturing him to manhood. Demeter accepts the position by stating:

παῖδα δέ τοι πρόφρων ὑποδέξομαι ὥς με κελεύεις:  
θρέψω, κοῦ μιν ἔολπα κακοφραδίῃσι τιθήνης  
οὔτ' ἄρ' ἐπηλυσίη δηλήσεται οὔθ' ὑποτάμνον:  
οἶδα γὰρ ἀντίτομον μέγα φέρτερον ὑλοτόμοιο,  
οἶδα δ' ἐπηλυσίης πολυπήμονος ἐσθλὸν ἔρυσμόν.

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<sup>39</sup> Clay 1989: 222, and n. 68.

<sup>40</sup> Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1932: 50.

<sup>41</sup> Zuntz 1971: 79.

<sup>42</sup> Richardson 1974: 81.

<sup>43</sup> Parker 1991: 7-9.

<sup>44</sup> Who, it should be noted, is not given a privileged position in the poem, appearing among other prominent Eleusinian men. There is no indication of his role in Eleusinian cult.

<sup>45</sup> Although, Demophoon himself is not named until line 234.

As for your boy, I will gladly take him over, as you request. I will rear him, and I do not anticipate that any supernatural visitation or cutter of roots will harm him through any negligence by his nurse. For I know a powerful counter-cut to beat the herb-cutter, and I know a good inhibitor of baneful visitation.<sup>46</sup>

Thereafter, Demeter raises the boy like the child of a god, giving him no food or drink but anointing him with ambrosia, breathing her sweet breath over him, and hiding him in the fire at night. The boy flourishes, and Demeter plans to make the boy ἀγήρων τ' ἄθάνατον ('ageless and deathless')<sup>47</sup> but before this can occur Metaneira spies on the goddess with the boy at night. Seeing her boy in the fire she shrieks in alarm alerting Demeter to her duplicity. Demeter removes the boy from the fire and lays him on the floor. The goddess then reveals herself to the Eleusinian queen, demanding that the people build a temple in honour, informing them that she herself will later instruct them in special rites to perform in her honour.<sup>48</sup>

When Demeter changes into her immortal form, Metaneira falls to her knees, while her daughters rush to the now inconsolable infant on the floor. Throughout the night the women attempt to propitiate the angry goddess, and in the morning they inform Keleos of what has occurred. He summons the people and orders the building of a temple as she has instructed. Once finished, Demeter takes up residence in the temple and does not leave, inflicting a terrible barrenness over the land for the next year. Following this, Zeus sends Iris, and then other gods, to attempt to appease Demeter until he finally sends Hermes into the Underworld to retrieve the abducted Persephone.

There is a possible aetiological implication for the establishment of a cult site to Demeter at Eleusis to be found in Demeter's role as Demophoon's nursemaid and Metaneira's subsequent discovery of her young son in the fireplace. There are four main indicators of the rites in the passage, which Richardson identifies: primary

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<sup>46</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 225-230. trans. West.

<sup>47</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 242.

<sup>48</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 269-274.

purification, fasting and abstention from wine, *aischrologia* and the *kykeon*.<sup>49</sup> There is a more prominent avenue of enquiry for the purposes of this thesis, however, involving Demeter's relationship with the Underworld and her treatment of the infant Demophoon.

Clay has argued that Demophoon should be viewed in the hymn as Demeter's attempted revenge on Zeus for his sanctioning of Persephone's abduction. He has taken away her only child and she intends not only to see Demophoon become immortal but to ultimately adopt him as her own child.<sup>50</sup> If she can be successful in this endeavour she will be able to violate the order created by Zeus' rule, and the choice of male child reinforces this concept. If Demeter were looking for a replacement for Persephone then a female child would have been more appropriate, but 'adopting a male child and rendering him immortal would allow the goddess to defy the authority of Zeus'.<sup>51</sup> What ultimately occurs, though, is that Zeus' domination is assured and the immortalisation of Demophoon fails.

This also demonstrates something quite different, because we can find parallels between the fear and grief felt by Metaneira upon discovering her son in the fireplace, and Demeter's feelings for the loss of Persephone, as Clay herself points out.<sup>52</sup> Certainly there is an element of human ignorance contrasted with divine knowledge in the hymn, and that is emphasised by Demeter's reaction to Metaneira's fear for her son. She speaks of:

νήϊδες ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἀφράδμονες οὐτ' ἀγαθοῖο  
αἴσαν ἐπερχομένου προγνώμεναι οὔτε κακοῖο.

Ignorant men and senseless, incapable  
of foreknowing the lot of coming good or evil.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Richardson 1974: 211. cf. Shelmerdine 1995: 43-44.

<sup>50</sup> Clay 1989: 226, 39.

<sup>51</sup> Clay 1989: 226.

<sup>52</sup> Clay 1989: 240.

<sup>53</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 256-257. trans. Clay.



Demeter had been consumed by fear and grief for her own child too.<sup>54</sup> Thus, Clay poses the question: 'Is it possible that Demeter, on her part, similarly mistakes the plan of Zeus for Persephone and can only conceive of it as signifying a permanent and total separation from her daughter – a kind of death?'<sup>55</sup>

Demeter's attempt at immortalising Demophoon<sup>56</sup> is not about reclaiming Persephone from death. The young goddess is already immortal, and even if she ends up residing permanently in the Underworld this fact will not change. Demeter ensures that Demophoon's memory will endure, even after his immortalisation proper fails, through the establishment of a hero cult dedicated to the young prince at Eleusis. This is, in some way, similar to the desire of the Eleusinian initiates who know that they cannot achieve immortalisation, but can, though forging a close relationship with the two goddesses, ensure that they are treated honourably in the afterlife.

The Homeric hymn depicts the goddess' nature as chthonic in many aspects. She is, as elsewhere in literature and in cult, closely aligned to the agricultural cycle. This is demonstrated not only in the cycle of barrenness and reestablishment of plenty that occurs in the poem, but in specific motifs that appear in the poem, for example the particular chthonic connotations of burying seeds in the earth. In having Demeter undertake Demophoon's care the poet shows an image of the goddess as having control over death; not to the same degree as her daughter's abilities to control death but a much more positivistic aspect. We must believe that if she had not been caught by Metaneira then her plan for Demophoon's immortalisation would have been successful. Thus, we see, that although she cannot control death itself, she has a power over a single aspect of it, namely that she can postpone the oncoming of death indefinitely.

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<sup>54</sup> It is easy to dismiss this 'Eleusinian episode' in the hymn as Demeter forgetting about Persephone in the Underworld, but Clay has very convincingly argued that she does not forget about her daughter, nor that she lets go of her anger and grief at this point. Clay 1989: 225-26..

<sup>55</sup> Clay 1989: 240.

<sup>56</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 263-267.

## Cults of Demeter Χθόνια

### *Hermione*

On the slopes of Mount Pron, near Hermione in the Argolis, there was a sanctuary of Demeter, which Pausanias says was founded by Klymenos, son of Phoroneus, and his sister Chthonia.<sup>57</sup> The Argive version of the story states that Demeter came to Argolis and was entertained by local hosts Atheras and Mysius, but another local, Kolontas, did not pay the goddess any respects. His daughter, Chthonia, did not approve of his conduct. For this infraction against Demeter, Kolontas was burned alive in punishment, but Chthonia was saved and transported to Hermione by the goddess, where she established a sanctuary dedicated to the goddess. Thus, Demeter was here called Chthonia,<sup>58</sup> and there was a festival of the same name held in the summer of each year. In front of the temple there were statues of women who served as priestesses of Demeter, and there were seats on the inside, which were for the old women who were involved in the festival procession. There were images of Demeter and Athena inside the temple. Pausanias did not record a cult statue, but he did say that the main object of devotion was unknown, perhaps indicating that there was an unseeable cult statue, which is also attested in the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore on the Akrokorinth.<sup>59</sup>

Pausanias is our most thorough source for the cult and festival, and although there are allusions in earlier works, as will be discussed below, there is no indication on the antiquity of the festival form that Pausanias describes.<sup>60</sup> This form was as

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<sup>57</sup> Paus. 2.35.4.

<sup>58</sup> Demeter is called 'Chthonia' in some later literature as well, although there are no examples in archaic or early classical literature; Ap. Rhod. *Argo*. 4.986-7; Anth. Pal. 6.31.2; Orph. *Hymn*. 40.12. The cult of Demeter Chthonia at Hermione has garnered much attention, both ancient and modern. Studies include Breglia 1997; M. P. Nilsson 1906: 329-30; Pirenne-Delforge 2001: 115-17; Prauscello 2013. For Hermione's special links with the Underworld see below and Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004: 11-12.

<sup>59</sup> Paus. 2.4.6-7; cf. Bookidis and Stroud 1997: 3-4.

<sup>60</sup> A similar version of this sacrifice is given by Aelian (*NA* 11.4). Sacrifice generally occurs as per Pausanias except for a few minor details, such as the four cows in Pausanias' version being rendered

follows: there was a procession that was headed by priests and magistrates, who were followed by citizen men and women. Within the procession there were a number of children who were given a special position, and who were dressed in white and wore wreaths of woven hyacinths,<sup>61</sup> which the locals called *kosmosandalon*. The letters of mourning (that is, 'AI', an expression of woe) were inscribed upon the flowers. Following this, a man led an untamed cow, which was eventually allowed to rush into the temple, after which the doors were closed with the cow inside. Inside the temple were four old women, one of which caught the cow and slit its throat with a sickle. This was repeated for a second, third, and fourth cow, with each cow having to fall on the same side of the old woman who dispatched it, based on the pattern set by the first cow.<sup>62</sup>

There are several remarkable details about this summer-time festival: old women<sup>63</sup> perform a secretive sacrificial ritual with a sickle as the sacrificial implement, and this takes place in a darkened recess of the temple, and all the sacrificial animals must fall on the same side.<sup>64</sup> The sickle is not found anywhere else in connection to the slaughter of sacrificial victims.<sup>65</sup> This clearly deviates from 'normal' sacrificial practice, which is in keeping with the 'chthonic' nature of the festival. There were public and secret elements to the festival itself, with the procession being open to the public (although highly segregated according to social or ritual status) and the sacrifice being closed to all but the four elderly priestesses. One particular element of the procession indicates a link to the narrative of Persephone's abduction, where children (presumably both girls and boys) wearing white are garlanded with hyacinths. The Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*

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in Aelian as a single bull. There is a clear contradiction in Aelian's account and an obvious confusion of sources. See Breglia 1997: 56-57; Johnston 2012: 222-24; Prauscello 2013: 83-84.

<sup>61</sup> Or irises.

<sup>62</sup> Paus. 2.35.5-10.

<sup>63</sup> On the abnormality of women performing sacrifice see Dillon 2002: 115-16, 245-46., old women indicating 'a ritual in opposition to the normal rules'. cf. Bremmer 1987: 199.

<sup>64</sup> cf. Johnston 2012: 213.

<sup>65</sup> Johnston 2012: 217.

twice mentions hyacinths<sup>66</sup> in relation to Persephone.<sup>67</sup> The first of these is the list of flowers being picked by Persephone and the Okeanids in the meadow immediately prior to Persephone's abduction by Hades. Although there is a wider mythic tradition of girls being abducted while picking flowers,<sup>68</sup> Persephone is arguably the most famous of these. Thus, that the *kosmosandalon* of the Hermionians has the quality of hyacinths invokes the flower-picking scene of Persephone's abduction. Further to this, pseudo-Apollodoros relates that the Hermionians were the ones to tell Demeter that Plouton had carried off her daughter, and from Hermione the goddess travelled to Eleusis.<sup>69</sup> There is another link to Persephone (or Kore) that strengthens this argument, which will be discussed below.

Pausanias uses the term *κατεργάζομαι* twice to describe the sacrifice,<sup>70</sup> which the author only uses three other times in the *Description of Greece*, and always with the connotation of a particularly brutal killing.<sup>71</sup> On no other occasion in the extant corpus of Greek sources is the term used for a sacrifice; the term usually means 'work upon' or 'cultivate'. This denotes that the sacrifice was not only a particularly brutal ritual killing, stronger in meaning than *σφάζω* and with more violent emphasis than the more standard sacrifice term *θύω*.<sup>72</sup> Its use therefore denotes, as Detienne comments, 'both the task that is carried out and the blood that is spilled, an ambiguity inherent in the instrument used for the sacrifice, the sickle (*drepanon*) carried by each of the four old women'.<sup>73</sup> Although Pausanias

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<sup>66</sup> And irises.

<sup>67</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 7, 427.

<sup>68</sup> Richardson 1974: 140-42, including catalogue of references.

<sup>69</sup> ps-Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.5.1.

<sup>70</sup> Paus. 2.35.7.

<sup>71</sup> Paus. 3.15.5, 4.25.10, 8.4.10; cf. Johnston 1999: 217-18.

<sup>72</sup> Johnston 2012: 218. It is, however, pertinent to remember that direction of sacrifice may indicate an Underworld or 'chthonic' ritual, and *θυοία* has the direct connotation of burning parts of a sacrificial victim in order for the smoke to travel up to the gods. Although we do find the term used for this sacrifice, its juxtaposition with *κατεργάζομαι* could serve to negate this 'ouranic'-centric meaning.

<sup>73</sup> Detienne 1989: 141.

does refer to the sacrifice as *θυσία* on two other occasions,<sup>74</sup> the act of singling out the violence of this particular sacrifice reinforces its status as marginal in relation to the 'normal' forms of sacrifice we find (in Pausanias and elsewhere). So-called 'chthonic' ritual practices are often marginal, thus we find wineless libation, dark or black victims, or night time rituals taking place. As discussed in chapter two this does not necessarily indicate that a particular ritual or sacrifice should necessarily be considered as chthonic, but in this context – where we have the epithet *Chthonia* – deviation from 'normal' practice should be expected.

What makes the case of the Hermionian cults more interesting is the cultic context in which Pausanias places them. Not only is there the sanctuary of Demeter *Chthonia*, which Pausanias singles out as being *λόγου μάλιστα ἄξιον* ('most worthy of mention'), but there are several other Underworld-related cultic elements all within close proximity to Demeter *Chthonia*'s sanctuary. There is a temple and sanctuary dedicated to Klymenos, whom Pausanias calls *βασιλέα ὑπὸ γῆν* ('king under the ground')<sup>75</sup> and who we may equate with Hades.<sup>76</sup> The link between the three divinities is confirmed in later Hellenistic and early Imperial inscriptions found at the site, which are dedicated jointly to Demeter *Chthonia*, Kore, and Klymenos.<sup>77</sup> Following on from this, Pausanias relates that there are three 'places' (*χωρία*), each surrounded by a stone wall, behind the temple of Demeter *Chthonia*. The Hermionians call these the places of Klymenos, Pluton, and the Archerousian lake (*τὸ μὲν Κλυμένου, τὸ δὲ Πλούτωνος, τὸ δὲ αὐτῶν λίμνη Ἀχερουσίαν*). In the place of Klymenos there is a large chasm in the earth, which is the place where Herakles brought Kerberos up from the Underworld.<sup>78</sup> Following on from this, Strabo comments that the Hermionians have a short-cut into the Underworld,<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Paus. 2.35.7, 2.35.8.

<sup>75</sup> Paus. 2.35.9.

<sup>76</sup> This links the goddess both to the Underworld through her son-in-law and to the foundation of Hermione itself, though the founder Klymenos. See Johnston 2012: 215.

<sup>77</sup> *IG* IV 686-91, 715, 727, 1609.

<sup>78</sup> Paus. 2.35.10.

<sup>79</sup> Strab. 8.6.12; cf. Callim. *fr.* 278.

casting the Hermionian landscape into a liminal space between the worlds of the living and the dead. There are no fewer than seven other temples dedicated to either Demeter or Demeter and Kore/Persephone in the urban or extra-urban landscape of the city,<sup>80</sup> but the singling out of Demeter Chthonia's cult by Pausanias, along with the underworldly cultic context of the surrounding areas, indicates that this is particularly important cult and perhaps one of the most important in Hermione.<sup>81</sup>

The cult of Demeter Chthonia in Hermione is mentioned briefly in Euripides' *Herakles*, although with no further context. Herakles and his father Amphitryon are discussing Herakles' descent into the Underworld and his capture of the three-headed beast, Kerberos.<sup>82</sup> Amphitryon asks whether Herakles left the beast with Eurystheos and the hero replies Χθονίας νιν ἄλσος Ἑρμιῶν τ' ἔχει πόλις ('The grove of the chthonian goddess and the city of Hermione have him now').<sup>83</sup> Both Kovacs, in the Loeb edition, and Barlow, in the Aris and Phillips edition, translate this as 'Demeter's grove' with reference<sup>84</sup> to the Underworld being called the home of Ἄιδης and Κόρη,<sup>85</sup> rather than Persephone.<sup>86</sup> This brief comment situates well within Pausanias' much later commentary on the area – in both accounts we find the mythic narrative of Herakles' capture of Kerberos being situated in the grove behind the temple of Demeter Chthonia in Hermione.

There is a cogent reference in a fragment from late sixth-century 'musical inventor and promoter of dithyrambic contexts in Athens',<sup>87</sup> Lasos, who came from Hermione<sup>88</sup>:

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<sup>80</sup> Cole 1994: 206; Prauscello 2011: 22, 2013: 77.

<sup>81</sup> cf. Perlman 2000: 164.

<sup>82</sup> Although Kerberos is not mentioned by name.

<sup>83</sup> Eur. *Her.* 615.

<sup>84</sup> Barlow 1996: 151. cf. Bond 1981: 219.

<sup>85</sup> Eur. *Her.* 608. cf. 1104, Barlow 1996: 172.

<sup>86</sup> Although, again, Barlow's translation is 'Hades and Persephone', while Kovacs' more refers to the 'maiden queen of hell'.

<sup>87</sup> Prauscello 2013: 76-77.

<sup>88</sup> Prauscello 2011: 20.

Δάματρα μέλπω Κόραν τε Κλυμένοι' ἄλοχον  
μελιβόαν<sup>89</sup> ὕμνον ἀναγνέων  
Αἰολίδ' ἄμ βαρύβομον ἁρμονίαν

I sing Demeter and Kore, wife of Klymenos,  
raising the honey-voiced hymn  
in the deep-sounding Aeolian harmony.<sup>90</sup>

This is quoted twice by Athenaeus,<sup>91</sup> with both citations mentioning that this belongs to a hymn dedicated to Hermionian Demeter,<sup>92</sup> and which may have been performed at the Chthonia itself.<sup>93</sup> The connection is clear within the context of the marriage of Kore and Klymenos, with Pausanias' assertion that the latter is analogous of Hades. This mention, particularly if this hymn was performed at the Chthonia, helps to forge a more meaningful link between the cults of Demeter Chthonia and Klymenos in Hermione.

A late third- or early second-century inscription<sup>94</sup> contains the text of an agreement between Hermione and Asine<sup>95</sup> regarding the arrival of ambassadors (πρεσβευταί) in Hermione to perform a sacrifice at the Chthonia. The cow mentioned in the opening lines of the text might refer to Asine providing one of the sacrificial cows for the festival.<sup>96</sup> What this shows is that the Chthonia, by this time, had become a draw for foreigners. The inscription specifically mentions the renewal of συγγένεια ('kinship') and φιλία ('friendship'),<sup>97</sup> and further to this there is a specific

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<sup>89</sup> Prauscello's recent study indicates that there is a possibility that this might read Μελίβοια and refer, as a cult epithet, to Kore. Linguistically and metrically the epithet would fit, and Prauscello's case for a cultic importance relating to cattle tending (though μέλω/μέλωμαι) rather than honey (through μέλι). See Prauscello 2011: 19-27.

<sup>90</sup> Lasos *fr.* 702 *PMG* (Page) = Athenaeus 14.624e. cf. Johnston 2012: 215; Prauscello 2011: 21, 2013: 77; Privitera 1965: 21.

<sup>91</sup> Athenaeus 10.455c-d, 14.624e-f.

<sup>92</sup> Athenaeus 10.455c (ὁ εἰς τὴν Δήμητρα δὲ τὴν ἐν Ἑρμιόني ποιηθεὶς τῷ Λάσῳ ὕμνος); 14.624e (Λάσος ὁ Ἑρμιονεὺς ἐν τῷ εἰς τὴν <ἐν> Ἑρμιόني Δήμητρα ὕμνω).

<sup>93</sup> Prauscello 2013: 89 and n. 77.

<sup>94</sup> *IG* IV 679.

<sup>95</sup> This probably refers to the city of that name founded around 700 on the west Messenian Gulf by refugees from the Argolid Asine; cf. Paus. 2.36.4-5, 4.34.9-12. See Perlman 2000: 163 and n. 30; Sfameni Gasparro 1986: 219-20.

<sup>96</sup> cf. Perlman 2000: 163 n. 31.

<sup>97</sup> *IG* IV 679.7-8.

provision for these ambassadors to be treated with ξένια ('hospitality').<sup>98</sup> There is other evidence that Hermione received (or solicited) interest in the Chthonia.<sup>99</sup> One possible reason for foreign interest in the cult, and more specifically in the Chthonia festival itself, could be the possibility that the festival constituted mystery rites of the goddess.<sup>100</sup> There are several pieces of evidence which indicate that this could be the case, but most notably the local Argolic version of Persephone's rape and abduction narrative and the association between that narrative and the establishment of the cult of Demeter Chthonia in Hermione. This includes pseudo-Apollodoros claiming that it was the Hermionians who alerted Demeter that Persephone has been abducted,<sup>101</sup> and the provision for locals to have helped Demeter in her search for her missing daughter.<sup>102</sup> Even in Pausanias' narrative of the actual establishment of the cult of Demeter Chthonia, in which Kolontas is burned alive in his house (while his daughter, Chthonia, is saved), could have mystery-related overtones, as Perlman suggests that this may represent an inversion of the attempted immortalisation of Demophoon found in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*.<sup>103</sup> Perlman also suggests that the area surrounding the Hermionian sanctuary of Demeter Chthonia might be topographically suitable for a re-enactment of Demeter's search for and reunion with her daughter, like the sacred drama that may be included in the initiatory rituals at Eleusis.<sup>104</sup> Further to this, there is the link between the 'place' of Plouton and the Ploutonion found at Eleusis.<sup>105</sup> The

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<sup>98</sup> IG IV 679.21.

<sup>99</sup> IG IV 727, 683-91. cf. Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004: 11.

<sup>100</sup> This may also account for the growth in popularity of the Chthonia festival during the Hellenistic period, see Perlman 2000: 164.; cf. Breglia 1997: 62-4; Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004: 12; Sfameni Gasparro 1986: 220-21.

<sup>101</sup> ps-Apollod. 1.5.1.

<sup>102</sup> Paus. 2.35.4. (where it is Mysios and Atheras who assisted the goddess), 1.14.2 (where it is Pelasgos and Chrysanthis who assist her).

<sup>103</sup> Perlman 2000: 165.

<sup>104</sup> Perlman 2000: 166. For arguments for and against the sacred drama being included in the Eleusinian Mysteries see Richardson 1974: 20-30.

<sup>105</sup> Mylonas 1961: 146-49.



Ploutonion was not considered to be the place where Hades had abducted Persephone.<sup>106</sup>

There are several name-lists<sup>107</sup> from Hermione which date to the fourth and third centuries, which could represent lists of initiates. The lists either contain the name of the individual alone or followed by the patronymic or matronymic name. These have been identified as men and women who have been initiated into the Mysteries of Demeter.<sup>108</sup> One of the name-lists includes the line ἔτους ἔκτου· Κλινοσώ,<sup>109</sup> and this could refer to those named on this tablet being initiated during the sixth year of service of the eponymous priestess of Demeter, Klinoso. All together the lists contain around five hundred names, which, as Perlman indicates, appears to be a considerable number for Hermione alone to have provided to the cult as initiates. But, as she continues, 'on the other hand, one might expect the *ethnikon* as the third part of the personal name of foreigners'.<sup>110</sup>

A third-century fragment written by Philikos of Korkyra,<sup>111</sup> possibly the beginning<sup>112</sup> of a *Hymn to Demeter*, confirms that this cult had a mystic character:<sup>113</sup>

τῇ χθονίῃ μυστικὰ Δήμητρί  
τὲ καὶ Φερσεφόνη καὶ  
Κλυμένῳ τὰ δῶρα.

Both the mystic rites belonging to Demeter Chthonia  
and the gifts of Persephone and Klymenos.<sup>114</sup>

The fragment clearly shows that there is a strong connection between Demeter Chthonia, Klymenos and the daughter-goddess (who is here Persephone, rather

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<sup>106</sup> Mylonas 1961: 148-49. Despite the suggestion at Orph. *Hymn.* 11.12.

<sup>107</sup> *IG* IV 728, 730-735; *SEG* XI 382.

<sup>108</sup> Boeckh, *CIG* 1207, 1211; cf. Perlman 2000: 165.

<sup>109</sup> *IG* IV 731.11.

<sup>110</sup> Perlman 2000: 166.

<sup>111</sup> Brown 1990: 174.

<sup>112</sup> Giuseppetti 2012: 117.

<sup>113</sup> Prauscello 2011: 22.

<sup>114</sup> *SH* 676.

than Kore), as we have found both in Lasos' fragment and Pausanias' account of the Hermionian cultic landscape. While this appears to mimic the Hermionian cult scene, and the Lasos fragment, quite well, there is little in the larger papyrus fragment that indicates that this does in fact refer to Hermione.<sup>115</sup> Brown notes that there may be a connection between the contents of the fragment and Attika, which is directly referenced,<sup>116</sup> along with Attic demes Eleusis,<sup>117</sup> and Halimous.<sup>118</sup> Giuseppetti more cautiously says that it is uncertain whether any such connection exists,<sup>119</sup> but does acknowledge that 'the surviving portions of the text, indeed, seem to refer to cultic actions pertaining to the Eleusinian mysteries'.<sup>120</sup> To strengthen the Eleusinian connection, or at least the mythic allusion to Eleusis, there is a mention of lambe towards the end of the long papyrus fragment.<sup>121</sup> Brown's analysis of the highly fragmentary opening section reveals that this may have references to Persephone, Hades, Demeter's search for her missing daughter, and barrenness being cast across the earth. The next part of the fragment is much better preserved,<sup>122</sup> and directly references the establishment of the Eleusinian Mysteries by Demeter, and the goddess is being propitiated to (apparently by other goddesses) in response to rendering the earth barren.

### *Sparta*

There was another cult of Demeter Chthonia in Sparta, on which Pausanias comments that the Lakedaimonians say that they honour the goddess 'under the guidance of Orpheus' (παραδόντος σφίσιν 'Ορφέως),<sup>123</sup> but the geographer considers it to be based on the cult at Hermione, which prompted the locals to

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<sup>115</sup> Brown 1990: 175-76.

<sup>116</sup> Line 58; cf. Brown 1990: 176.

<sup>117</sup> Line 36.

<sup>118</sup> Line 54.

<sup>119</sup> Giuseppetti 2012: 118.

<sup>120</sup> Giuseppetti 2012: 121.

<sup>121</sup> *SH* 680; the section of text leading up to and including the lambe passage is given in Brown 1990: 177.

<sup>122</sup> This section of text is given at Brown 1990: 183.

<sup>123</sup> Paus. 3.14.5.

worship Demeter Chthonia. Pausanias does not say any more on this cult. Demeter might not seem to be a prevalent goddess in the Spartan pantheon, particularly given that the Spartiates themselves did not have a personal relationship with the land as they were not involved in its cultivation.<sup>124</sup> Thus, as Parker comments, '*perioikoi* and helots had a more practical interest in the gifts of... Demeter'.<sup>125</sup> Pausanias mentions not only the cult of Demeter Chthonia in Sparta, but also a cult of Demeter Eleusinia,<sup>126</sup> and a temple of Kore Soteira.<sup>127</sup> For a divinity for whom the local inhabitants supposedly have no particularly affinity, it seems that they have dedicated more temples than required to her and her daughter. Alongside these, there are a number of other sanctuaries dedicated to Demeter and Kore within Lakonia.<sup>128</sup> A fifth-century inscription<sup>129</sup> mentions a number of chariot-racing victories of the Spartan Damonon at the *Eleuhunia*, which is probably a Spartan vocalisation of the Eleusinia.<sup>130</sup> Parker concludes that this inscription refers to a Lakonian Eleusinia festival, rather than the Attic Eleusinia, due to the lack of evidence for Damonon succeeding in other panhellenic festivals.<sup>131</sup> Unambiguous references to Demeter and Kore being the focus of the Eleusinian cult here do not start until the third century.<sup>132</sup> If the Eleusinia here was related in some way to the Attic cult, then we have something of a replication of the cultic setting found in Hermione, with worship dedicated to Demeter Chthonia and Demeter Eleusinia.

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<sup>124</sup> Cartledge 2002: 162; Parker 1988: 99.

<sup>125</sup> Parker 1988: 99.

<sup>126</sup> Paus. 3.20.5-7.

<sup>127</sup> Paus. 3.13.2.

<sup>128</sup> for example, a *megaron* of Demeter in Kainepolis (Paus. 3.26.9); a shrine of Demeter in Gythion (Paus. 3.21.8) and a shrine of Demeter in Aigila (Paus. 4.17.1).

<sup>129</sup> *IG* V<sup>1</sup> 213.

<sup>130</sup> *IG* V<sup>1</sup> 213. 11, 31. Buck 1955: 26; Parker 1988: 101. For arguments against this being a cult dedicated to the indigenous Lakonian Eleuthia/Elusia (as local variant of childbirth goddess Eileithyia) see Parker 1988: 101-02.

<sup>131</sup> Parker 1988: 101. cf. the entry in Hesychios, s.v. 'Ελευσίνια· ἄγων θυμελικὸς ἀγόμενος Δήμητρι παρὰ Λάκωσιν.

<sup>132</sup> Parker supposes that the first is a dedication by Kymbadeia (*SEG* 11.677b) which is tentatively dated by Cook to the third century. See Parker 1988: 102 n. 35.

The Eleusinian Demeter has, as I have stated above, clear agricultural connotations in her worship, and we might suppose that a single city had no need for two strict agrarian cults dedicated to the same goddess, and so we might say that the cults dedicated to Demeter Chthonia were more likely to be worship with a chthonian-as-Underworld aspect. What this means is that we now have two potential cults of Demeter in an Underworld guise without a necessary agrarian overtone.

### *Kallatis*

There is another probable cult of Demeter Chthonia in the Doric colony of Kallatis on the Black Sea. Kallatis had been founded by the end of the sixth century.<sup>133</sup> Epigraphic evidence here suggests that several cults, including the cult of Demeter Chthonia, were faithfully replicated from the city's metropolis, Megara.<sup>134</sup> There are two specific inscriptions that mention Demeter Chthonia, one of which is from the fourth century, and the other from the first century.<sup>135</sup> The earlier inscription refers to a group of private *θοινάται* ('banqueters') honouring Demeter Chthonia.<sup>136</sup>

### *Pherai*

The so-called Orphic gold lamellae also contain a reference to Demeter Chthonia in Pherai,<sup>137</sup> although this evidence is admittedly much later (late fourth or early third century).<sup>138</sup> Unlike other lamellae, this specific tablet does not narrate the journey of the deceased through the Underworld, but the inclusion of Demeter Chthonia indicates that it retains a strong eschatological nuance. The text of the tablet is short in comparison to some of the other gold lamellae, and reads:

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<sup>133</sup> Avram 1999: 9-11, 2006: 67.

<sup>134</sup> Paus. 1.43.5-6. See Avram 1999: 91-5, 342-4.

<sup>135</sup> *IScM III* 40 (first century) and 48A (fourth century) in Avram 1999: 312-14, 42-46. cf. Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004: 12; Prauscello 2013: 79.

<sup>136</sup> *IScM III* 40. cf. Avram 1999: 313; Johnston 2012: 214 n. 5.

<sup>137</sup> The tablet is Edmonds D5/Graf and Johnston 28. Originally published in Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004. cf. Edmonds 2011; F. Ferrari and Prauscello 2007b; Graf and Johnston 2013.

<sup>138</sup> Discussion of P.J Parsons in Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004: 5-6.

πέμπε με πρὸς μυστῶ<ν> θιάσους· ἔχω ὄργια [     ]  
Δήμητρος χθονίας τέλη καὶ Μητρὸς ὀρεί[ας]

Send me to the *thaisoi* of the initiates; I possess the tokens [     ]  
the rites [or offices] of Demeter Chthonia and of the Mountain  
Mother.<sup>139</sup>

While, as I have previously mentioned, the gold lamellae may represent an initiatory based cult, this tablet does not suppose that the so-called 'Orphic' or 'Bakchic' cult is being conflated with the 'mystery' cult of Demeter Chthonia at Hermione. Indeed, this text appears to indicate that the tablets might not have been a used by a homogenous group of like-thinkers or believers, but rather a wider phenomenon that is more divorced from 'Orphism'.<sup>140</sup> This does not indicate, however, that the lamellae – particularly those whose texts diverge the most significantly from the main body of texts found on the lamellae – were made with a different purpose in mind. As Parker and Stamatopoulou comment regarding the Pherai tablet, 'it belongs to the same genre as them even if all the words in it are different'.<sup>141</sup> Although any mystery elements present in the Hermionian cult might have influenced the choice of Demeter Chthonia as the divinity that this tablet invokes, that there is no mention of either Kore or Klymenos, along with the presence of Meter Oreia ('Mountain Mother') make the connection untenable.<sup>142</sup> There is no evidence for a fixed cult of Demeter Chthonia and Meter Oreia and therefore this tablet cannot bear relationship to such a cult.

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<sup>139</sup> Text from Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004: 6. Graf/Johnston 28; Bernabé/ Jiménez San Cristóbal L13a; Edmonds D5. trans. Johnston.

<sup>140</sup> Along with this, there is the fact that none of the tablets so far uncovered have been of Attic origin, while 'Orpheus-initiators' are well attested as being active in Attika. See Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004: 23, 24.

<sup>141</sup> Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004: 25.

<sup>142</sup> cf. Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004: 12.

## Other 'Chthonic' Cults of Demeter(s)

### *Phigalia and Thelpousa*

If we look at Demeter's mythic heritage outside the Homeric hymn and into analogous traditions which involve Persephone's rape, what we find is a significantly more complex picture of the goddess. Pausanias records a number of traditions about Demeter that share a number of common elements. In Phigalia, a city in the mid-Peloponnesian territory of Arkadia, the story goes that Poseidon raped Demeter following Persephone's disappearance.<sup>143</sup> The goddess fell pregnant and gave birth to another daughter, whom the Arkadians name Despoina – the Mistress.<sup>144</sup> Mourning Persephone's loss and wrathful at Poseidon, Demeter retreated into a cave, donning black robes.<sup>145</sup> The vegetation and population began to die out, as Demeter hid away, until Zeus sent the Moirai to her, whereupon she set aside her wrath and moderated her grief.<sup>146</sup> Following this, the Phigalians declared her cave-hideaway a sacred site and erected a wooden statue in Demeter's honour:

πεποιῆσθαι δὲ οὕτω σφίσι τὸ ἄγαλμα: καθέζεσθαι μὲν ἐπὶ πέτρᾳ, γυναικὶ δὲ εἰκέναι τᾶλλα πλὴν κεφαλὴν: κεφαλὴν δὲ καὶ κόμην εἶχεν ἵππου, καὶ δρακόντων τε καὶ ἄλλων θηρίων εἰκόνες προσεπεφύκεσαν τῇ κεφαλῇ: χιτῶνα δὲ ἐνεδέδυτο καὶ ἐς ἄκρους τοὺς πόδας: δελφίς δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς ἦν αὐτῇ, περιστερὰ δὲ ἡ ὄρνις ἐπὶ τῇ ἐτέρᾳ. ἐφ' ὅτῳ μὲν δὴ τὸ ξόανον ἐποιήσαντο οὕτως, ἀνδρὶ οὐκ ἄσυνέτῳ γνώμην ἀγαθῶ δὲ καὶ τὰ ἐς μνήμην δῆλὰ ἐστὶ: Μέλαιναν δὲ ἐπονομάσαι φασὶν αὐτήν, ὅτι καὶ ἡ θεὸς μέλαιναν τὴν ἐσθῆτα εἶχε.

The statue was like this: she was sitting on a rock, and looked like a woman except for the head; she had a horse's head and mane, with serpents and other beasts growing out of her head; she wore a tunic down to her feet, she had a dolphin on one hand and a dove on the

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<sup>143</sup> Demeter and Kore are worshiped at a sanctuary of Poseidon in Corinth. Their shrine was characteristically high up in the Arkokorinthian hillside and was removed from the main temenos. This also occurs at sites on Thasos and in Mytilene. See Anderson-Stojanović 2002: 75-76.

<sup>144</sup> Paus. 8.42.1.

<sup>145</sup> Paus. 8.42.2.

<sup>146</sup> Paus. 8.42.3.

other. To anyone of intelligence with a good memory it is obvious why they made the wooden image in this shape. The say she was named Black because the goddess was also dressed in black.<sup>147</sup>

Pausanias mentions that this statue was lost to fire, apparently at the start of the fifth century,<sup>148</sup> and following a second period of barrenness the Delphic Oracle was consulted and the Phigalians were ordered to dedicate a second statue. This commission was based on the original and a dream of the new sculptor, Onatas of Aegina.<sup>149</sup> The statue being the work of this sculptor places these events in the first half of the fifth century. Pausanias obviously did not see the lost statue, and its form seemed to defy local traditions: Dietrich comments that 'the shape of the old statue of Demeter in the cave in particular seems unusual even in Arcadia, the home of many archaic cults'.<sup>150</sup> The second statue had disappeared by the time of Pausanias' visit, although an altar had been built at the mouth of the cave, and offerings left there consisted of grapes and other cultivated fruits, honeycombs, unspun wool, and oil.<sup>151</sup> Pausanias records the response from the Oracle as:

Ἀρκάδες Ἀζᾶνες βαλανηφάγοι, οἱ Φιγάλειαν  
νάσσασθ' , ἵππολεχοῦς Δηοῦς κρυπτήριον ἄντρον,  
ἦκετε πευσόμενοι λιμοῦ λύσιν ἀλγινόεντος,  
μοῦνοι δις νομάδες, μοῦνοι πάλιν ἀγριοδαῖται.  
Δηῶ μέν σε ἔπαυσε νομῆς, Δηῶ δὲ νομῆας  
ἐκ δησισταχύων καὶ ἀναστοφάγων πάλι θῆκε,  
νοσφισθεῖσα γέρα προτέρων τιμᾶς τε παλαιάς.  
καὶ σ' ἄλληλοφάγον θήσει τάχα καὶ τεκνοδαίτην,  
εἰ μὴ πανδήμοις λοιβαῖς χόλον ἰλάσσεσθε  
σῆραγγός τε μυχὸν θείαις κοσμήσετε τιμαῖς.

Arkadian, Azanian acorn-eaters,  
people of Phigalia, O, people  
of stallion-mated Deo's hidden cave,  
you came for a cure of painful famine,

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<sup>147</sup> Paus. 8.42.4. trans. Levi (with amendments)

<sup>148</sup> H.W Parke and Wormell 1956a: 323.

<sup>149</sup> Paus. 8.42.7.

<sup>150</sup> B. C. Dietrich 1962: 130.

<sup>151</sup> Paus. 8.42.1.

in exile twice, living wild twice,  
no one but you: and Deo took you home,  
made you sheaf-carriers and oatcake-eaters,  
makes you live wild now, because you stopped  
your father's worship, her ancient honours.  
You shall consume yourselves, be child-eaters  
if your whole people will not soothe her spleen,  
and dress the deep cave in divine honours.<sup>152</sup>

Parke and Wormell maintain that the response indicated cannot be placed within the fifth-century dating of the episode, but is rather of Hellenistic or early Roman composition.<sup>153</sup>

The response addresses the Arkadians as 'acorn-eaters' due to their claim to be the most ancient peoples of Greece, who once lived on acorns before Demeter gave them the gift of agriculture. By failing to propitiate to her adequately the population had been thrust back into their own (dietary) past and may yet, as the oracle claims, have to resort to cannibalism in order to feed themselves due to their ongoing agrarian barrenness – in other words, their loss of Demeter's gift. It is interesting that Demeter's fertility and agrarian abundance should be emphasised in the traditionally infertile lands of Arkadia. The oracle points out the marginality of agriculture in the region, and the local population's fragile relationship with the earth by emphasising the ease with which Demeter could throw them back into a pre-agricultural phase of their heritage.

Pausanias' comment that anyone who was 'learned in tradition, would understand' why Black (μέλαιναν) Demeter from Phigalia was being represented as a half-horse likely comes from another Demetrian cult, in the Arkadian city of Thelpousa. This is, presumably, also the reason she was connected to the horse in the oracular verse examined above, although Pausanias doesn't specifically mention either of these possibilities. The story Pausanias presents here is similar, except that

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<sup>152</sup> Paus. 8.42.6. trans. Levi. cf. Anderson 1987: 139; Overmark Juul 2010: 234-35; H.W Parke and Wormell 1956b: 200, 1956a: 323-5.

<sup>153</sup> H.W Parke and Wormell 1956a: 324.



Demeter tries to rebuff Poseidon's advances by disguising herself as a mare. In response, the god transformed himself into a stallion and raped her. Initially, Demeter was angry but later relented and, after laying her anger and grief aside, bathed in the river Ladon. Following this, she received two cult epithets from the locals – Erinys and Lousia: Fury and Bather.<sup>154</sup> While the latter of these names indicates a possible connection to Artemis,<sup>155</sup> the former reinforces a connection between Demeter and (the) Eriny(e)s, and could indicate the ancient nature of the cult, perhaps even going back to early archaic or Mycenaean times.<sup>156</sup>

Two statues of Demeter stood in her temple at Thelpousa, one depicting each guise of the goddess, with the state of Demeter Erinys the larger of the two.<sup>157</sup> Demeter Erinys stood with a torch in her right hand and a *kiste* in her left hand.<sup>158</sup> The torch is frequently associated with Demeter, and so we might not see any particular issues with the inclusion of it here, and it need not have any particular 'chthonic' association, as we find the torch used in many non-'chthonic' settings throughout the Greek world, particularly associated with Demeter,<sup>159</sup> at Eleusis for example. Again, Pausanias did not actually see either statue. The role played by the horse motif in the Phigalian and Thelpousan local traditions demonstrates its significance in both mythic traditions, even though the horse is only a direct element of one of the local mythic traditions, if we discount the form of the (unseen) statue and the brief mention in the (probably later) oracle.

In Thelpousa the union of Demeter and Poseidon, both in the guise of horses at the time, produces the horse Arion and a daughter, whose name cannot be

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<sup>154</sup> Paus. 8.25.4

<sup>155</sup> B. C. Dietrich 1962: 137-40.

<sup>156</sup> This supposition is based on the presence of Erinys in Linear B tablets. See discussion below for more on this.

<sup>157</sup> Paus. 8.25.6. cf. Jost 1985: 63.

<sup>158</sup> B. C. Dietrich 1962: 129.

<sup>159</sup> Some scholars have been quick to add a nocturnal element to cults when the image of the torch is present, for example Bookidis and Stroud 1997: 2. In relation to the cult of Demeter and Kore on the Akrokorinthian hill in Corinth conclude that the cult probably involved nocturnal rites because of the surrounding mythic story (provided by later sources Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch).

known to the uninitiated.<sup>160</sup> Pausanias comments that this daughter, known to the Arkadians as Despoina, the Mistress, was the most worshiped divinity in the whole region.<sup>161</sup> The birth of the unknowable mistress, whose true identity is hidden to all those who are uninitiated<sup>162</sup> is interesting here. Pausanias clearly differentiates between Despoina and Kore (who he clearly equates with Persephone by way of Homeric revelation) but he does not give the Mistress a name.<sup>163</sup>

In Thelpousa there is also, on the other side of the city and also situated on the Ladon River, a sanctuary of Eleusinian Demeter.<sup>164</sup> If there was a connection between these the cults of Demeter Eleusinia and those of Demeter Erinys and Lousia this might indicate that there is an increased likelihood of a chthonic-as-agrarian function to the latter cults. More likely is that the two cults function as complementary to one another. The Eleusinian Demeter has obvious agricultural overtones due to the associations that come with the connection to Eleusis, whether or not the cult was formally connected with Eleusis. Meanwhile, the cult of Demeter Erinys has a clear chthonic-as-Underworld element due to the connection with Erinys.<sup>165</sup> Any connection would also depend highly on the dates of these cults, with the cult of Demeter Eleusinia probably not having been established before the fourth century.<sup>166</sup>

### *Myrrhinous*

Myrrhinous, in Attika, has a temple which contains an altar dedicated to Demeter Anesidora ('sender up of gifts'), again according to Pausanias.<sup>167</sup> We have already seen a connection between the Underworld and fertility in the form of seed burying,

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<sup>160</sup> B. C. Dietrich 1962: 130.

<sup>161</sup> Paus. 8.37.9: ταύτην μάλιστα θεῶν σέβουσιν οἱ Ἀρκάδες τὴν Δέσποιναν ('The Arkadians worship Despoina more than any other god').

<sup>162</sup> Paus. 8.25.5.

<sup>163</sup> Paus. 8.37.10.

<sup>164</sup> Paus. 8.25.2.

<sup>165</sup> This will be discussed further below.

<sup>166</sup> Bowden 2007: 73.

<sup>167</sup> Paus. 1.31.4.

and this was explicitly stated in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. Pausanias does not go into detail about the temple or any cult attached to it, there are also statues of Zeus Ktesios, Tithrone Athena, 'first-born' Kore and Semnai Theai. The close connection with Kore is unsurprising, and tells us little about the nature of any cult here. That she is first born may be a reference to Demeter's second daughter, Despoina, whom she gives birth to while searching following Persephone's abduction into the Underworld.<sup>168</sup> This would obviously give a stronger connection to the Underworld aspects that an epithet like Anesidora might invoke. It is much more likely, particularly with the connection to Zeus Ktesios (as god of gain), that this epithet should be read with a wholly agrarian function.

### *Akragas*

In Akragas in Sicily there is a sanctuary that has been identified as a 'Sanctuary of Chthonian Divinities'<sup>169</sup> which may have held an archaic cult of Demeter and Persephone.<sup>170</sup> There are three small shrines here, each with an altar and 'circular constructions'.<sup>171</sup> One of these small shrines forms a part of a series of three structures, or intended structures, one of which may have been a peripteral temple. It appears that, within the temple dedicated to Demeter and Persephone/Kore, each of the goddesses had an individual altar dedicated to them.<sup>172</sup> The presence of two distinct types of altars,<sup>173</sup> as well as what may be a sacrificial pit,<sup>174</sup> within the wider sanctuary may indicate sacrificial rituals dedicated to both Olympian/ouranic divinities and chthonian divinities. Berve and Gruben suggested that the large

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<sup>168</sup> For more on this see the following section.

<sup>169</sup> Hinz 1998: 79; Holloway 1971: 81, 1991: 63.

<sup>170</sup> Berve and Gruben 1963: 434; Yavis 1949: 71.

<sup>171</sup> Holloway 1971: 80, 1991: 63.

<sup>172</sup> Yavis 1949: 75. This occurred at other sanctuaries dedicated to the pair as well, for example, at Eleusis. See Clinton 1974: 82.

<sup>173</sup> Both hollow rectangular and ceremonial altars have been found at the sanctuary. Yavis 1949: 71-74.

<sup>174</sup> Yavis 1949: 131. This is the altar A11/12 in Hinz 1998: 80. For the use of pits in 'chthonic' rituals see appendix four.

number of altars at the sanctuary indicated that not only were Demeter and Persephone worshiped here, but also Hades and Hekate.<sup>175</sup>

The general area contained four such temples, three of which are now ruins and one which was transformed, in the nineteenth century, into the 'Temple of the Dioskouroi'. Material finds here clearly indicate that the sanctuary was active in the archaic period but there is a general lack of information regarding the site. Identification as a site dedicated to Demeter and Persephone/Kore is not confirmed, but there appear to be similarities to the temple of Demeter and Persephone in Kyrene.<sup>176</sup>

### *Syracuse*

Hesychios of Alexandria connected Syracusan Demeter and Persephone to the cult of Demeter Chthonia by giving the goddesses the epithet 'Hermione'<sup>177</sup> This may be because of Hermionian membership in the colonisation of the Corinthian colony of Syracuse.<sup>178</sup>

### *Mytilene*

The sanctuary dedicated to Demeter on Mytilene may have been the site of some form of worship or sacrifice to the goddess in a chthonic form. The sanctuary itself displays no evidence of overt 'Underworld' related practices, but the presence of a large number of piglet remains could indicate a Thesmophoria or Thesmophoria-like festival.<sup>179</sup> Ruscillo claims that the presence of a hearth altar in the sanctuary is 'fitting for the worship of chthonic deities, such as Demeter and Persephone',<sup>180</sup> and a similar altar was found in the Sanctuary of Chthonian Divinities in Akragas,<sup>181</sup> which

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<sup>175</sup> Berve and Gruben 1963: 434.

<sup>176</sup> White and Renyolds 2012: 176.

<sup>177</sup> Hesychios s.v. 'Ερμιόνη· καὶ ἡ Δημήτηρ καὶ ἡ Κόρη ἐν Συρακούσαις.

<sup>178</sup> Jameson et al. 1994: 69.

<sup>179</sup> Ruscillo 2013: 182-85.

<sup>180</sup> Ruscillo 2013: 185.

<sup>181</sup> Ruscillo 2013: 185.

may have been a sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone. Nonetheless, this alone does not indicate that the Mytilenean sanctuary should be considered a cult dedicated to Demeter in a chthonic guise. It appears that there are multiple altars dedicated here, possibly to Demeter and Persephone/Kore separately, as in Akragas or Eleusis, and one of the altars has yielded almost no animal remains.<sup>182</sup> There is, however, a sacrificial ash pit adjacent to the other altar and it appears that sacrificial victims were burnt inside this pit.<sup>183</sup> The material in this pit is 'composed almost entirely of charred and calcined piglet remains'<sup>184</sup> and some of the piglets appear to have only been a few days old at sacrifice, although there are some remains that could indicate prenatal victims, indicating that there may have been sacrifice of pregnant sows. Further to this, the remains of entire piglet skeletons indicate that holocaustic sacrifice took place here.<sup>185</sup> While we must be wary of ascribing a 'chthonic' label based entirely on circumstantial ritual practices, particularly as we have seen in chapter two that such a practice yields unreliable results, the combination of pregnant sacrifice and holocaustic sacrificial practices might indicate dedication to a 'chthonic' Demeter.

#### The Erinyes and Demeter Erinys

We have already seen that gods – including, but not particularly, death gods – exhibit multi-faceted personalities; as Johnston comments they 'have both positive and negative traits and behave now generously, now badly towards the mortals who depend on them'.<sup>186</sup> Superficially, the Erinyes do not fit this model. They appear to be wholly negative divinities, even in contexts that might otherwise be positive. For instance, the Argive elders of Aischylos' *Agamemnon* mention the Erinyes when giving thanks to Zeus for the destruction of Troy:

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<sup>182</sup> Ruscillo 2013: 186.

<sup>183</sup> Ruscillo 2013: 187.

<sup>184</sup> Ruscillo 2013: 187.

<sup>185</sup> Ruscillo 2013: 188.

<sup>186</sup> Johnston 1999: 251.

τῶν πολυκτόνων γὰρ οὐκ  
ἄσκοποι θεοί. κελαι-  
ναὶ δ' Ἑρινύες χρόνῳ  
τυχηρὸν ὄντ' ἄνευ δίκας  
παλιντυχεῖ τριβᾷ βίου  
τιθεῖσ' ἀμαυρόν, ἐν δ' αἰ-  
στοῖς τελέθοντος οὔτις ἀλ-  
κά

For the gods do not fail to take aim  
against those who have killed many, and in time  
the black Erinyes enfeeble him  
who has been fortunate against justice,  
reversing his fortune and corroding  
his life, and when he comes  
to the land of the unseen, he has no protection.<sup>187</sup>

This last line refers to the Erinyes' capacity to pursue the criminal even beyond death, until they exacted punishment from him. This idea is significant in an environment in which general thoughts about the afterlife did not include punishment after death, except in extraordinary mythic circumstances.

There is no surviving material evidence for the establishment of cults dedicated to the Erinyes, and there is very little evidence that they were involved in any kind of ritual activity. One of their most well-known protagonistic roles is in the story of Orestes, where they are inconsistently characterised through different retellings. Even with Aischylos' *Oresteia* they are presented as both fleeting, intangible, ethereal sources of misfortune in the *Agamemnon*,<sup>188</sup> as the source of personal mental torture in the *Choephoroi*,<sup>189</sup> and as personified beings in the *Eumenides*.<sup>190</sup> This first incarnate appearance in Aischylos' *Oresteia* occurs at the beginning of the *Eumenides*, where the sleeping Erinyes surround the young matricide, who is slumped over the *omphalos* in Delphi, dripping with the blood of

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<sup>187</sup> Aisch. *Ag.* 461-468. trans. Sommerstein (with amendment)

<sup>188</sup> Aisch. *Ag.* 59, 463, 465, 749, 991, 1119, 1190, 1433, 1580.

<sup>189</sup> Aisch. *Cho.* 283, 402, 577, 652

<sup>190</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* especially 64-234, 244-1047.

his mother as though he had arrived directly from committing the murder.<sup>191</sup> The Pythia's reaction enhances the gruesomeness of the scene – she crawls out of the temple, stricken with horror, at the sight she witnessed inside. This is the image of the Erinyes of the 'worst-case-scenario' tragedy, because Aischylos is 'imagining what would happen if everything went as wrong as it possibly could, and of watching disaster play itself out to a final crash'.<sup>192</sup> By the end of the play the volatile Erinyes are transformed, by Athena, into the placated Semnai Theai. It is worth noting that Aischylos does not refer to the Erinyes as transforming into 'Eumenides'. The association between the Erinyes and the Eumenides is made by explicitly Euripides.<sup>193</sup>

The shift is often described as an aetiological mythologisation of the establishment of the court of the Areopagos,<sup>194</sup> which dealt with murder cases in classical Athens.<sup>195</sup> The Erinyes initially threaten Orestes with private revenge,<sup>196</sup> but they are ultimately denied the opportunity. The narrative can equally be described as an aetiology for the establishment of the sanctuary of the Semnai Theai situated under the Acropolis in Athens. The character evolution of the Erinyes from the beginning to the closing of the *Eumenides* does not demonstrate any functional or inherent physical changes in the goddesses. Athena orders an outward change of appearance in saying φοινικοβάπτοις ένδυτοίς έσθήμασι τιμᾶτε ('dress them honourably in scarlet-dyed robes').<sup>197</sup> Following on from the assertion that gods are double-natured, we can begin to unravel the lack of cultic dedication to the Erinyes. Ritual practice dedicated to Underworld gods was significantly less likely to leave behind any kind of permanent or semi-permanent site construction.<sup>198</sup> Further to

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<sup>191</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* 40. The scholiast comments that στάζοντα] έμφαντικῶς <διὰ> τούτου <τὸν> νεωστὶ ηὔθεντηκότα παρίστησιν. ('dripping] here expresses that he came directly from committing the murder') Schol. Aisch. *Eum* 42a.

<sup>192</sup> Johnston 1999: 257.

<sup>193</sup> Eur. *Or.* 37-38.

<sup>194</sup> Goldhill 1984: 282-83; Podlecki 1966: 63.

<sup>195</sup> Hyde 1918: 334-37; MacDowell 1963: 39.

<sup>196</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* 174-177, 225, 231, 264-268, 305.

<sup>197</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* 1028-1029.

<sup>198</sup> See appendix four.

this, it is not likely that people would expressly dedicated to divinities who were, more generally, viewed as being hostile, or even ambivalent, towards mortals.<sup>199</sup> There is some evidence for cultic worship to nameless divinities that could match the profile of the Erinyes. This does not mean, however, that the Erinyes should be automatically equated to the Semnai Theai of Athens, nor to any other nameless divinities. There is no evidence that the Erinyes were associated with this cult prior to the staging of Aischylos' play, and the connection was more than likely about the perception of the gods worshiped there rather than any true connection.<sup>200</sup> This does not mean that after Aischylos connected the Erinyes to the cult of the Semnai Theai in Athens that people did not associate the two different groups of divinities.

The characterisation of the Erinyes as violence-oriented divinities begins in Hesiod's *Theogony* where they are born as the result of an intended patricide. Ouranos, king of the gods, is ambushed by his son, Kronos, who has planned to overthrow his father, with his mother's guidance. Kronos severs Ouranos' genitals and casts them across the earth, which is fertilised by the splatters of blood and, in time, Gaia gave birth to the Erinyes. The blood from this violent family crime becomes the semen which impregnates the earth and produces the goddesses. They are, quite literally, chthonic – χθόνιος – *from* the earth. Given the later renderings of the Erinyes as goddesses who avenge familial violence it could be logical to assume that this function has some background in their Hesiodic birth story, which features such violence. Hesiod, however, presents no such function for the Erinyes. Likewise, in Homer, the Erinyes are only mentioned once in connection to the slaying of a family member, and this is the only time they are called upon regarding a violent act.<sup>201</sup> What this shows is that characterisations of the Erinyes as divinities who are only concerned with the avenging of murder (familial or

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<sup>199</sup> Johnston 1999: 269.

<sup>200</sup> That is to say that gods who do not exist in the first place cannot be transformed into other gods, nor amalgamated or connected to in any way. The shift is not in the nature of the being, but in the worshiper's perception of that (invisible, unknowable) being.

<sup>201</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.571-572.



otherwise) is not supported by the early source material. Half of all appearances of Erinyes or the Erinyes in Homer do, nonetheless, appear in connection with familial crimes, including punishing offences against a father,<sup>202</sup> an elder brother,<sup>203</sup> and a number of mothers.<sup>204</sup> In these examples the Erinyes are shown protecting the family and involved in the punishment of familial injustices, and this is a far removed from their portrayal as goddesses who are exclusively tied to the enactment of violent retribution upon kin-killers, and even the punishment of familial crimes is not their sole responsibility in Homer.

With the exception of the punishment of family-crimes, Homeric and Hesiodic poetry seems to have encouraged a strong connection between the Erinyes and oaths,<sup>205</sup> and more specifically with the punishment of those who break oaths. Hesiod reports that the Erinyes assisted at the birth of the goddess Horkos – Oath personified – warning that the fifth day of each month should be regarded as inauspicious due to the occasion of her birth.<sup>206</sup> Agamemnon calls upon the Erinyes, along with other divinities, to witness his oath to the Argives that he had not touched Briseis in any way while she was in his care and although he swears first to Zeus, it is the Erinyes who Agamemnon specifically mentions in connection to the punishment he would face for breaking the oath.<sup>207</sup> This connection was carried though into classical period texts, and even into the text which gives us the archetypal image of the Erinyes as kin avengers, the *Eumenides*. Here, the Erinyes demand that Orestes swear an oath, complaining to Athena that the young matricide was not willing to do so in order to resolve the matter.<sup>208</sup> There is no oath that could reach such a resolution; Orestes has already admitted guilt, he cannot

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<sup>202</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.454.

<sup>203</sup> Hom. *Il.* 15.204.

<sup>204</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.571, 21.412; *Od.* 2.135.

<sup>205</sup> Fletcher 2007: 107.

<sup>206</sup> Hes. *WD.* 803.

<sup>207</sup> Hom. *Il.* 19.258-261.

<sup>208</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* 429.

now swear that he did not kill Klytaimestra.<sup>209</sup> Athena herself rebukes the use of oaths in litigation, saying to the Erinyes, ὅρκοις τὰ μὴ δίκαια μὴ νικᾶν λέγω ('I say that oaths must not win victory for injustice').<sup>210</sup> Is Aischylos trying to reconcile his 'new' form of the Erinyes as weaker single-faceted goddesses whose primary duty is the enforcement of retribution upon those who have committed violent crimes against family members, with an older – albeit fading – function of the Erinyes as enforcers of oaths? Oaths did still play a major role in the litigation process in Athens in the fifth century, where they mainly took the form of an accuser swearing that his accusations were true,<sup>211</sup> and then the defendant swearing that the accusations against him were false.<sup>212</sup> All witnesses would also be required, at the beginning of their testimony, to swear that what they were going to say was relevant to the case.<sup>213</sup> It appears, therefore, that by the beginning of the fifth century the oaths taken in the context of litigation has been relegated to a procedural task which carried no real threat for perjurers.<sup>214</sup> Homicide trials, in particular, involved numerous bouts of oath swearing which seemed to also function as a way for the jury and the magistrate to avoid being inflicted by pollution if they cast the wrong vote.

The connection the Erinyes share with oaths presupposes another connection, too, with curses – for, as Burkert says, 'the Erinyes are simply an embodiment of the act of self-cursing contained in the oath'.<sup>215</sup> It is erroneous to view these powerful Underworld goddesses as 'simply an embodiment' of the oath; but nonetheless the oath itself should be viewed as a 'self-curse' and that along draws a connection between curses and the Erinyes. In the context of the Homeric

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<sup>209</sup> And, quite contrary to this, Orestes had earlier sworn that he *would* kill his mother, and when his resolve was fading it was Pylades' reminder of this oath which steeled Orestes to carry the act out (Aisch. *Cho.* 899-902). Following this, Orestes also swore that he had carried out Klytaimestra's murder justly (Aisch. *Cho.* 984-990).

<sup>210</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* 432.

<sup>211</sup> For example, Ant. 6.16, Lys. 10.11; Dem. 23.67, 59.10.

<sup>212</sup> For example, Ant. 6.16, Lys. 10.11; Dem. 23.67.

<sup>213</sup> Ant. 5.11; cf. Ant. 6.9; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 67.1.

<sup>214</sup> For more on oaths in Athenian litigation, see Gagarin 2007.

<sup>215</sup> Burkert 1985: 198.

epics we can view the Erinyes as being inherent administrators and enforcers of curses in the same way that they are administrators of oaths. Phoinix tells us that his father had effectively called upon the Erinyes to curse him into remaining childless after he had deflowered his father's new concubine. For this, Phoinix plans to kill his father but can't bring himself to actually do it.<sup>216</sup> In another episode, Althaia beats upon the ground to get the attention of the Underworld gods, calling upon Hades and Persephone to curse her son following the slaying of her brother.<sup>217</sup> However, it is Erinyes who answers her call. Erinyes is here acting as the agent of the Underworld gods – a direct representative of Persephone. This association continues into the classical period where, in Aischylos, the Erinyes tell Athena that Ἀραὶ δ' ἐν οἴκοις γῆς ὑπαὶ κεκλήμεθα ('we are called curses in our home under the earth').<sup>218</sup>

Even in their role as protectors of families, the Erinyes' affinity for enforcing oaths and enacting curses is evident, particularly when these coincide with episodes of familial crime. The family members who leave behind avenging Erinyes are, in all actuality, leaving behind a curse, which the Erinyes are enactors of. Oidipous is inflicted with πολλὰ μάλ', ὅσσα τε μητρὸς Ἐρινύες ἐκτελέουσιν ('so many sorrows, all that a mother's Erinyes might make happen'),<sup>219</sup> and his children are similarly inflicted by the πότνια τ' Οἰδίπου σκιά, μέλαιν' Ἐρινύς, ἧ μεγασθενής τις εἶ ('awful shade of Oidipous, black Erinyes').<sup>220</sup> Oidipous' son, Eteokles, bemoans:

φίλου γὰρ ἐχθρά μοι πατρὸς τάλαιν' ἀρὰ  
ξηροῖς ἀκλαύτοις ὄμμασιν προσιζάνει,  
λέγουσα κέρδος πρότερον ὑστέρου μόρου.

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<sup>216</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.459.

<sup>217</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.569-572.

<sup>218</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* 417.

<sup>219</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.280.

<sup>220</sup> Aisch. *Seven.* 978-979, cf. 991-992.

Yes, for the hateful <black[?]> Curse of the father who should have loved me sits close by me with dry, tearless eyes, saying "The gain comes before the death that comes after."<sup>221</sup>

The Theban women ask in reply:

μελάναιγες δ' · οὐκ  
εἶσι δόμων Ἐρινύς, ὅταν ἐκ χερῶν  
θεοὶ θυσίαν δέχωνται;

The Eriny's black squall will leave your house, once the gods receive a sacrifice at your hands?<sup>222</sup>

Eteokles can only respond by saying that the gods had already abandoned them.<sup>223</sup> Antigone especially, suffers, through the actions of her uncle, Kreon – who is similarly warned by the seer Teiresias that offspring of his will be taken in penance for what he has done:

τούτων σε λωβητήρες ὑστεροφθόροι  
λοχῶσιν Ἅιδου καὶ θεῶν Ἐρινύες,  
ἐν τοῖσιν αὐτοῖς τοῖσδε ληφθῆναι κακοῖς.

For these crimes the avenging destroyers lie in wait for you, the Erinyes of Hades and the gods, waiting to seize you in these same sufferings.<sup>224</sup>

We should not imagine, though, that it is only the Erinyes called forth by the death of Iocaste that inflicts itself upon this family. Pindar's account of Oidipous' story tells that ἰδοῖσα δ' ὄξει' Ἐριννὺς ἔπεφνέ οἱ σὺν ἀλλαλοφονίᾳ γένος ἀρήιον ('the sharp-eyed Erinyes saw [Laios' murder] and destroyed [Oidipous'] warlike sons though mutual slaughter').<sup>225</sup> It should not seem strange that the Erinyes are both

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<sup>221</sup> Aisch. *Seven*. 695-697. trans. Sommerstein.

<sup>222</sup> Aisch. *Seven*. 699-701. trans. Sommerstein.

<sup>223</sup> Aisch. *Seven*. 692-700.

<sup>224</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 1074-1076.

<sup>225</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 2.41-42.

avenging and destroying these families, for while it is true that the Erinyes are concerned with defending the rights of the dead, the gods are simultaneously beneficial and detrimental to mankind.

Aischylos demonstrates the Erinyes' affinity with curses when they sing out a binding spell to Orestes. This song is similar in content to invocations found on later curse tablets, and songs of this kind may have been sung as incantations while undertaking the more performative ritual actions of the curse.<sup>226</sup> The Erinyes first warn Orestes, chanting καὶ ζῶν με δαίσεις οὐδὲ πρὸς βωμῷ σφαγεῖς· ὕμνον δ' ἀκούσῃ τόνδε δέσμιον σέθεν ('while still alive, not slain at any altar, you'll make a feast for me; you shall hear this song, your binding-spell!').<sup>227</sup> And then, weaving about him, they sing:

μᾶτερ ἅ μ' ἔτικτες, ὦ μᾶτερ  
Νύξ, ἀλαοῖσι καὶ δεδορκόσιν  
ποινάν, κλῦθ'. ὁ Λατοῦς γὰρ ἱ-  
νὶς μ' ἄτιμον τίθησιν  
τόνδ' ἀφαιρούμενος  
πτῶκα, ματρῶον ἅ-  
γνισμα κύριον φόνου.

ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τεθυμένῳ  
τόδε μέλος, παρακοπά,  
παραφορὰ φρενοδαλῆς,  
ὕμνος ἐξ Ἑρινύων,  
δέσμιος φρενῶν, ἀφόρ-  
μικτος, αὐονὰ βροτοῖς.

τοῦτο γὰρ λάχος διανταία  
Μοῖρ' ἐπέκλωσεν ἐμπέδως ἔχειν,  
θνατῶν τοῖσιν αὐτουργίαι  
ξυμπέσωσιν μάταιοι,  
τοῖς ὁμαρτεῖν, ὄφρ' ἄν  
γὰν ὑπέλθῃ· θανῶν δ'  
οὐκ ἄγαν ἐλεύθερος.

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<sup>226</sup> Johnston 1999: 76-77.

<sup>227</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* 305-306.

Mother, O mother Night,  
who bore me to be  
a punishment for the blind  
and for those who see,  
hear me! The child of Leto  
is depriving me of my rights  
by snatching away from me  
this hare, a proper sacrifice  
to cleanse a mother's murder.

And over this sacrificial victim  
this is my son: insanity,  
derangement, the mind-destroying  
chant of the Erinyes  
that binds the mind, sung  
to no lyre, a song to shrivel men up!

For this was the lot  
that death-dealing Moira  
spun for us in perpetuity:  
for those mortals to whom there happen  
wanton murders of kinsfolk  
to dog their footsteps till  
they go beneath the earth – and when he has died  
he is not all that free.<sup>228</sup>

It is not any religious cleansing or purificatory ritual that eventually frees Orestes from the Erinyes' pursuit. It is, instead, judicial exoneration, which the matricide-invoked Erinyes participate in quite freely. It is with the assistance of these ancient goddesses of revenge that, mythically speaking, the first Athenian law court is established. No other classical author charges the Erinyes with a judicial task of this nature, and no task like this is seen in Homer or Hesiod. In Sophokles, the Erinyes are called upon by Elektra to aid Orestes and to avenge Agamemnon, not Klytaimestra.<sup>229</sup> In Euripides' work they only serve to drive Orestes mad as he shoots at them from his bed with an imaginary bow,<sup>230</sup> or stabling indiscriminately at cattle

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<sup>228</sup> Asich. *Eum.* 321-388. trans. Sommerstein (with amendments)

<sup>229</sup> Soph. *El.* 122.

<sup>230</sup> Eur. *Or.* 255-274.

thinking that he is warding them off.<sup>231</sup> It seems that the Erinyes, throughout time, prefer to remain in their own veiled otherworld, causing madness and infertility; silently and invisibly afflicting their victims.

Three Linear B tablets from Knossos feature the name E-ri-nu, an early form of Erinyes. In the first tablet,<sup>232</sup> she features alongside early forms of Zeus, Athena, and Poseidon. On the second,<sup>233</sup> she received a dedication of olive oil,<sup>234</sup> along with di-we, Zeus, and pa-si-te-o-i, all the gods.<sup>235</sup> The third contains only the name e-ri-nu.<sup>236</sup> Although one of these instances could represent the nominative plural,<sup>237</sup> it is more likely that the name is rendered in the dative singular, and thus there are only certain examples of a singular Erinyes.<sup>238</sup> Erinyes is not singled out from the other gods on these tablets: she appears as they do and is offered the same devotion. When this is coupled with the obvious lack of etymology,<sup>239</sup> we can be certain that Erinyes is a goddess. Pausanias suggests that her name may derive from the Arcadian

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<sup>231</sup> Eur. *IT*. 281-295

<sup>232</sup> V52.

<sup>233</sup> Fp (1)1.

<sup>234</sup> Bendall 2007: 125.

<sup>235</sup> See also Boëlle 2004: 169; Davies and Duhoux 1988: 197; Johnston 1999: 250; Murray 1979: 107-08; Ventris and Chadwick 1973: 305-07.

<sup>236</sup> Fh 390.

<sup>237</sup> e-ri-nu-we on V52.

<sup>238</sup> Murray 1979: 108.

<sup>239</sup> On the etymology of the Erinyes, Beekes says:

A connection with the mythical stallion Ἐπίων (Ἀπίων, Ὀπίων; Bechtel 1921, 1:349) requires further demonstration. Pre-Greek origin can be expected, cf. Herter *Lexis* 3 (1954): 232 and Arena *Helikon* 6 (1966): 144f.

Neumann *Sprache* 32 (1986): 43-51 proposes an IE reconstruction *\*eri-snh<sub>1</sub>-u-* 'who provokes struggle', from *\*sneh<sub>1</sub>-* as in *νεῦπον*. This would give, however, *\*eri-san-u-* > *\*eri-(h)anu-*; this could be avoided by assuming that the laryngeal was lost in the compound. However, does 'provoke struggles' fit the Erinyes? Heubeck *Glotta* 64 (1986): 164 states that such a meaning "zwar nicht restlos geschwunden, aber doch... weitgehend zurückgedrängt worden ist."

In sum, there is no good IE etymology and the word is probably Pre-Greek. For an Indo-European etymology, the ending *-ūz* would have to be from *-uH-s*, i.e. *-u-h<sub>2</sub>-*, but a "Motions-femininum" of this type is not known in Greek. Thus the ending seems to be Pre-Greek. Moreover, the variation *v/vv* may represent that palatized phoneme *nʷ* (cf. *ℓ* in Ἀχιλ(λ)εύς; for the phenomenon see *Pre-Greek*: B1) (Beekes 2010: 459.)

ἐρινύω, meaning 'to be wrathful',<sup>240</sup> but, as Johnston comments, 'this seems like a clear example of a back formation'.<sup>241</sup> This background context may go some way to helping identify an 'original' Erinyes that is not solely centred on the horrific and terrifying creature invoked by her Aischylean introduction and later categorisation as the 'Furies'.

The goddess who appears in these Linear B tablets may be a conception similar to Demeter Erinys, rather than a single and separated Erinys.<sup>242</sup> Demeter herself does not appear in any of the extant Linear B tablets, but this does not mean that E-ri-nu and Demeter should be considered the same, or that there was no 'Demeter-like' goddess who appears as the 'great mother'. Murray comments that we can be sure that the Mycenaean 'E-ri-nu' does not directly correspond, particularly in the goddess' nature, to the conception of the Erinyes by Homer.<sup>243</sup> She also suggests that the Mycenaean Erinys corresponds in nature more to the Demetrian concept of a so-called chthonic fertility divinity,<sup>244</sup> as we find in the case of Demeter Erinys in Pausanias.

Pausanias is explicit about connection between Demeter and Erinys, combining them in a cultic setting, and this is echoed elsewhere in literature as well. For example, Apollodoros mentions that Arion was conceived by Poseidon and Demeter when she was in the form of an Erinys.<sup>245</sup> In some of these versions the loss and retreat motif is not present, and variously the goddess in question may only be called Erinys, but the mythic connection is clearly present in the overarching details of these narratives. Both Pausanias and the scholia to the *Iliad* say that this story was told in the lost epic the *Thebais*, which is dated to the seventh or sixth century.

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<sup>240</sup> See above for further discussion of Pausanias' passage, where his discussion focuses on Demeter Erinys.

<sup>241</sup> Johnston 1999: 251 n. 54.

<sup>242</sup> S. Marinatos 1972.

<sup>243</sup> Murray 1979: 107.

<sup>244</sup> Murray 1979: 108.

<sup>245</sup> ps-Apollod. 3.6.8; cf. Kall. *fr.* 652 (Gelzer/Whitman); schol.*Il.* 23.346 = Theb. *fr.* 6c; Lyc. 153, Hsch. s.v. Arion.



## Conclusion

Primarily, Demeter is an agrarian goddess, even in situations in which she has death-related aspects, and even the most telling of these – the epithet 'Chthonia' – is, in one prominent location, aetiologically explained by Pausanias as having little to do with the Underworld, but rather given by association with a mortal cult establisher. In this description of the Hermionian cult, and its main festival, Pausanias appears unwilling to even consider the Underworld aspects of the cult, which are reinforced by other closely-located Underworld-associated cults. The stress that he places on the mortal provenance of the name removes Underworld agency out of both the name and the cult. So, it appears that Pausanias is attempting to create a less aspectually 'chthonic' cult by explaining away the main link between the goddess and the Underworld.

Cults of 'chthonic' Demeter were largely extensions of agrarian concerns. Chthonic cults usually appears alongside more 'traditional' agrarian-themed cults. The close connection between these Underworld and agricultural contexts would have influenced local conceptualisations of the goddess, so although we find select cults dedicated to 'chthonic' Demeter, her relationship with the Underworld is tempered by agricultural cults. The individual 'Orphic' tablet dedicated to Demeter Chthonia is the only truly chthonic-as-underworld appearance of the goddess, and certainly the only appearance with an exceptionally strong eschatological connotation. Demeter does not have any other death-related function, and is never known to reside in the Underworld (her closest connection is Persephone's part-time residence there). She does not undertake any contact with the dead, and is not involved in any rites in which she directly performs a 'death-and-rebirth'. Although she is strongly associated with Persephone's marriage-as-death-and-rebirth, her role (particularly in the context of the Eleusinian Mysteries, and in the Homeric hymn) is about the restoration of life rather than the performance of death. While her attempt at immortalising Demophoon ultimately fails, she still imparts a

kind of apotheosis – in the form of hero cult – on the young prince. While this pseudo-deification is not replicated for initiates to Demeter Eleusinia, the enhanced relationship cultivated between the worshiper and the goddess acts as a consolation for the mortal's inability to achieve immortality. What we find is that Demeter's Underworld connection, much like the seed which is buried in the ground to facilitate its growth, is actually about strengthening her connection of life, even when she is superficially concerned with death.

## 6: Hekate, Queen of Restless Ghosts?

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Hekate's reputation in later literature, and in much modern scholarship, is that of a malevolent sorceress who enjoys a strong association with the moon. Warr, for example, comments that 'it is amply established by literary and archaeological evidence that this lunar goddess owed her real dignity to chthonic attributes'.<sup>1</sup> However, he gives no concrete examples of either literary or archaeological evidence. In fact, quite contrary to his original statement, he discusses the Hesiodic apportionment of her honours with a specific acknowledgement that her realm of influence does not extend to the Underworld. Similarly, there is a tendency to associate Hekate with lunar aspects; sometimes, but not always, related to a concept of the 'chthonic'. Kerényi, for instance, makes a connection between Hekate and Phoibe, stating that the former is a 'reappearance' of the latter, and that this gives Hekate a lunar aspect.<sup>2</sup> This is a tendentious and erroneous assumption, and Hekate does not have a strong association with the moon until Roman times. The vast majority of evidence pointing to this connection has been incorrectly interpreted or later information has been added in or extrapolated. For example, the connection between Hekate and torches has been interpreted as having nocturnal, and therefore lunar, connotations – but no such connotations are read into Demeter's well-established association with the torch.<sup>3</sup> Rabinowitz conjectures that this back-connection has been made because the Greek pantheon did not provide a strong, well-established and developed moon-related goddess, and while Luna was central to Roman religion, they did rely heavily on the Greek pantheon as a template for their own literature and art.

There was a connection to be made between Hekate and the moon in Roman times as, Rabinowitz comments, 'the Romans believed the moon affected

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<sup>1</sup> Warr 1895: 392.

<sup>2</sup> Kerényi 1974: 36.

<sup>3</sup> See Rabinowitz 1997: 534 n. 2.

all sub lunar developments: wind, rain, and tides, human and animal life, even the “growth” of minerals and earthquakes. But above all her influence is strong upon the vegetable kingdom’.<sup>4</sup> This echoes the sentiments about the important place of the moon in Roman authors. Horace, for instance, sings to his chorus:

rite Latonae puerum canentes,  
rite crescentem face Noctilucam,  
prosperam frugum celeremque pronos  
volvere mensis.

As you duly sing of Latona’s son, duly of the Nightlighter with her crescent torch, who gives increase to our crops and swiftly roles the hurrying months.<sup>5</sup>

And Cicero comments:

ab eoque luna inluminata graviditates et partus adferat  
maturitatesque gignendi.

and also the moon, which is the source of conception and birth and of growth and maturity.<sup>6</sup>

While these do not directly mention Hekate, they do demonstrate a strong connection between the moon and human and divine fertility in the Roman literature, and both of these were also strongly connected with Hekate; the former in the Roman period and the latter, as we shall discover below, also in Greece. This does not, of course, indicate that there was an earlier connection between the three – the moon, fertility, and Hekate – at play. There is much written about the connection between Hekate and the moon, but there is a dearth of ancient evidence indicating that this is the case in the archaic and classical periods.

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<sup>4</sup> Rabinowitz 1997: 535.

<sup>5</sup> Hor. *Carm.* 4.6.37-40. trans. Rudd.

<sup>6</sup> Cic. *De Nat Deo.* 2.119. trans. Rackham.

As we have already seen in the discussions on Persephone and Demeter above, agrarian and human fertility were closely linked, and fertility had a strong connection with so-called 'chthonic' attributes, and the prominent position played in both agricultural and human fertility by the moon in Roman religion follows this pattern. It therefore becomes understandable that Hekate might be (re)constructed into a lunar goddess. After all, she has connections with Eleusis and the Mysteries, has some traditional agrarian iconography including the lit torch, bowl, and whip, she already exhibited a threefold shape,<sup>7</sup> and is sufficiently shadowy for lunar attributes to be easily placed onto her.<sup>8</sup> Many scholars now agree on Hekate's non-Greek heritage, situating her origin in western Asia Minor, probably in Karia.<sup>9</sup> By the fifth-century, at least, Hekate cults had arrived in Greece and she was being worshiped in Aegina, Selinous and Athens. There appears to be no earlier archaeological evidence from mainland Greece for Hekate worship, but there is some evidence in Asia Minor.<sup>10</sup> Hekate must have been known to the Greeks prior to this, perhaps as early as 700,<sup>11</sup> as her appearances in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, and Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Catalogue of Women* confirm.

Graf has argued that this early form of Hekate was associated with passage through liminal periods,<sup>12</sup> which would explain a later role as a goddess who guides young women through transitional parts of life. Indeed, as we shall see below, Hekate assists Persephone herself through a kind of 'coming-of-age', marriage-related, liminal period in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. This informs her aspect as

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<sup>7</sup> The introduction of lunar attributes to Hekate most likely did not predate the threefold shape of Juno. That is, the Juno-threefold goddess was already established before Hekate was introduced into the Roman pantheon and given lunar attributes. See Rabinowitz 1997.

<sup>8</sup> Although it is worth mentioning that Ennius' *Epicharmus* calls the moon Proserpina – that is, Persephone. This is not a concept which is reflected popularly. There was a similar occurrence when Isis was imported into Rome and given lunar attributes, see Rabinowitz 1997: 536.

<sup>9</sup> Burkert 1985: 171; Graf 1985: 257-59; Johnston 1990: 21; Kraus 1960: 55-56; M. L. West 1966: 277. Although Farnell had a different view, placing Hekate's origins in Thrace, see Farnell 1896: 502-07.

<sup>10</sup> M. L. West 1966: 277.

<sup>11</sup> M. L. West 1966: 277.

<sup>12</sup> Graf 1985: 257-59.

an intermediary between gods and men, which Clay believes is one of the key attributes of her appearance in the *Theogony*.<sup>13</sup>

### Hekate in Hesiod's *Theogony*

Hesiod's treatment of Hekate in the *Theogony* is unique, especially regarding its length. The passage, which falls roughly at the mid-point of the poem, is forty-one lines in length, and details the birth, history, influence, and powers of the goddess.<sup>14</sup> The passage includes more divine-mortal interaction than any other section of the *Theogony*. The so-called 'Hymn to Hekate'<sup>15</sup> can be briefly summed up as:

411: Hekate is presented as the daughter of Asteria and Perses

412-415: Zeus gives her a share of the earth, sea and heaven

416-418: Mortals always invoke her in prayers and rituals<sup>16</sup>

418-421: She grants favours to mortals who honour her

422-425: Zeus allows her to keep her Titanic honours

426-428: She assists in the judgement of men

429-447: She blesses those whom she favours, which specifically includes  
kings (430, 434), warriors (431-433), athletes (435-438), cavalrymen  
(439), and fishermen 440-442)

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<sup>13</sup> Clay 1984: 27-38.

<sup>14</sup> Hes. *Th.* 411-452. See appendix five for the full text.

<sup>15</sup> Although the passage is not formally a hymn, it does contain 'several hymnic elements: superlatives, repetitions, a description of the god's τιμή, etc.'. Stoddard 2004: 7. cf. Griffith 1983: 52. Warr goes so far to say that 'it has too little consistency to merit the title of a 'hymn', which is sometimes bestowed on it. Indeed, it can only be described as an incoherent medley', and 'a strange kind of "contaminatio"'. Warr 1895: 390.

<sup>16</sup> Hesiod considers sacrifice to be a regular ritual that include twice daily libations, and larger offerings wherever possible. This section does not seem to indicate that Hekate requires separate or special offerings from this. On the point that mortals always invoke Hekate, M.L. West comments: 'Invocations of Hekate were probably not common west of the Aegean at this period; but perhaps Hesiod did not mean "everyone nowadays is invoking Hekate", but rather (paratactically) "a man invokes Hekate, and she hears him", i.e. if he invokes her, she hears him'. See M. L. West 1966: 282-83.

448-449: She is honoured by the Olympian gods even though she is an only child

450-452: She is *kourotrophos* (nursemaid) to all living creatures

What is notably missing from this section is any reference to attributes of the goddess that are prominent in later authors, including any 'chthonic' characterisation, lunar or magical traits, mention of cross-roads, torches, or of the triple-guise. There has been much scholarship on the authenticity of this passage, with one prominent idea that the passage was not composed by Hesiod but was a later interpolation, interpretation or insertion.<sup>17</sup> However, the passage is not known to have been disputed in antiquity.<sup>18</sup> M. West believes that the passage shows Hesiod's own religious beliefs at work, and subsequently comments that the hymn 'is a section of extreme interest for the student of Greek religion; for seldom elsewhere do we find a Greek setting out in so full a statement of his personal beliefs concerning the nature and powers of a god'.<sup>19</sup> This argument is based on several factors found within the poem itself, and within the wider extant body of Hesiod's work. Although Hesiod's father came from Aeolian Kyme, his trading activities would have brought him into contact with Hekate-worshipping cities.<sup>20</sup> West conjectures that if he became a devotee of Hekate, this might account for him naming Hesiod's brother Perses, the name Hesiod gives to Hekate's father. West goes on to comment that the prolixity with which Hesiod addresses Hekate's birth and honours – mirrored by his address to the Muses – might suggest that this is something of a personal passage for the poet. The passage is rather long,

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Jacoby 1930: 162-64; Kirk 1962: 62, 80; M.P Nilsson 1967: 1.722; Sellschopp 1934: 52 n. 83; Warr 1895: 390-93; Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1931: 169-72.

<sup>18</sup> Warr 1895: 9. Warr argues that the second half of the passage – lines 429-449 – are a later interpolation. This is based on the inclusion of 'stock phrases' which are 'cumbrous' and 'a bad imitation of the Homeric... it is altogether distinct from the picturesque Hesiodic conceits...' Warr 1895: 391.

<sup>19</sup> M. L. West 1966: 276-77.

<sup>20</sup> M. L. West 1966: 278. cf. Stoddard 2004: 8; von Rudloff 1999: 12.

particularly for the amount of information it contains, in comparison to similar treatments of other divinities within the poem.

West's assertion that the 'Hymn to Hekate' shows that the poet of the *Theogony* was writing autobiographically was supported by Stein's 1989 thesis. She comments that:

The individual, who comes before his public with the speaking of his own name, expresses himself as proud of his creation, places himself on a par with the βασιλῆς, professes an entirely personal relationship with a goddess [sc. Hekate], possesses a pronounced consciousness of himself. He does not remain in the darkness of anonymity, nay, he ventures as an individual person into the light of publicity, albeit still unsure and at times rather hesitant. Yet his pride in his calling, in his performance, brings the Boeotian shepherd even to this, to speak of himself, of his faith, of his conception of poetry. That which in Homer remains unsaid and must remain so, becomes in Hesiod a revelation of a new attitude, which came about in conjunction with the establishment of writing.<sup>21</sup>

Clay, however, reasons that Hekate's role in the *Theogony* stems from an etymologisation of her name, as she 'by whose will – ἔκητι – prayers are fulfilled'.<sup>22</sup>

The arguments that this passage reflects Hesiod's own personal preference for the goddess are not very convincing. West's assertion relies on two small details from the *Works and Days*; namely, that Hesiod's brother was named after Hekate's father and that his own father was trading in areas that had prominent Hekate worship (in which he presumably participated). There is no indication that this contact resulted in a devotion to the goddess or that that devotion was passed on

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<sup>21</sup> 'Das Individuum, das mit Namensnennung vor sein Publikum tritt, sich stolz über sein Schaffen äußert, sich auf eine Stufe mit den βασιλῆς stellt, ein ganz persönliches Verhältnis zu einer Göttin [sc. Hekate] bekennt, besitzt ein ausgeprägtes Bewußtsein seiner selbst. Es bleibt nicht im Dunkel der Anonymität, nein, es wagt sich als einzigartige Person ins Licht der Öffentlichkeit, zwar noch unsicher und bisweilen etwas stockend. Doch der Stolz auf der Berufung, auf das Geleistete bringt den böotischen Hirten dazu, von sich, selbst, seinem Glauben und seiner Dichtungsauffassung zu reden. Was bei Homer ungesagt blieb und bleiben mußte, wurde bei Hesiod zum Aufweis einer neuen Geisteshaltung, die im Zusammenhang mit der einsetzenden Schriftlichkeit aufkam'. (Stein 1990: 23-24. trans. Stoddard 2004: 34.)

<sup>22</sup> Clay 1984: 438.



to Hesiod himself. Furthermore, theophoric names<sup>23</sup> do not necessarily represent personal devotion to the particular divinity one is named after.<sup>24</sup> The appeal of Hesiod, or at least his father, being a personal devotee of Hekate is that it nicely explains the anomalous nature of the passage inserted into the *Theogony*. It is, however, a rather over-stretched interpretation, given the prevalence of theophoric names in antiquity and the problems with the locations of the family and the major cult sites of the goddess.

That Hesiod attributes Hekate with the power to work within the realms of earth, sea, and sky should not automatically make us assume that she had any form of absolute control over any of these realms. Rather, we should consider that she can simply work within and influence each of these realms; this ties in nicely with Clay's concept that all of the attributes gifted to Hekate in the *Theogony* are linked to the meaning of her name. The problem here is one of etymology: Liddell and Scott, in line with Clay, list Hekate as meaning 'one who works her will,' while the Intermediate version of the same lexicon lists 'Hekate, the *far-darter*'. Beekes cites

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<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, the influence of Underworld gods is not generally found in theophoric names, these include Kore, Persephone, Hades, Plouton and divinities such as the Erinyes and Eumenides. As such, as Robert Parker concludes, 'it seems to follow that Hekate cannot have had her grimmest aspect in those regions where Hekat- names are common'. Parker 2000: 55.

<sup>24</sup> von Rudloff 1999: 12. There are two situations in which one might argue that theophoric names do represent personal devotion, both described by Parker, and these are when a particular god or goddess assists in the birth of the child, most likely Asklepios, or when an oracular god predicts the safe conception or birth of a child:

A vivid concrete example can, for once, be quoted. According to a verse inscription of the third century set up at Delphi, Apollo 'heard the prayer' of an anonymous couple and 'granted them offspring in response' (γενεάμ μαντεύμασι δῶκεν), requiring a hair-offering in return; in the eleventh month, after a trouble free pregnancy, the wife gave birth with ease, helped by Lochia, the Fates, and Phoibos, to a thriving (γόνιμος) daughter (with hair already reaching her eyes, and destined to reach her chest in the first year). The parents named the girl Delphois, 'because of the prophesy and in commemoration of Delphi' (μαντείας ἔνεκεμ μνημεῖά τε Δελφῶν). (Parker 2000: 63.)

There is also the tradition of theophoric names being used as family names, in which each family member is given a different 'version' of the same theophoric name (i.e. the same stem name, with a different suffix). See Loewe 1936: 16; Parker 2000: 60-61. However, this is clearly not occurring in the case of Hesiod's brother's theophoric name.

Hekate's name as originally being an epithet, 'assumed to have resulted from a cross of ἑκατηβόλος or ἑκηβόλος', however, he concludes that the goddess' name is, 'more probably of pre-Greek origin'.<sup>25</sup> If the goddess' name is pre-Greek, or simply has no clear etymological heritage, it is more in line with the names of other divinities, many of which also have no obvious etymology.

This passage of Hesiod also includes the first extant reference to the *kourotrophos*.<sup>26</sup> Hesiod mentions that Hekate has been given the special honour of being nursemaid to all mortal children:

θῆκε δέ μιν Κρονίδης κουροτρόφον, οἳ μετ' ἐκείνην  
ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἴδοντο φάος πολυδερκέος Ἡοῦς.  
οὕτως ἐξ ἀρχῆς κουροτρόφος, αἳ δέ τε τιμαί.

And the son of Kronos made her the nanny of all mortal children  
Who with their own eyes thereafter behold the light of the sunrise.  
So she was born from the start the nurse of these children and these  
are her honours.<sup>27</sup>

This appears to be a function that Hekate carries with her into the classical period, where sacrifices are made to her in the guise of *kourotrophos* at her sanctuary in Erchia, in Attika.<sup>28</sup> There is also a sacrifice made here, in the sanctuary of Hekate, to the goddess 'Artemis Hekate', and thus we find the dominant goddess of the sanctuary cast into the role of mere epithet. There may be a similar sacrifice to Hekate as *kourotrophos* in Samos, although there is disagreement regarding whether this should be understood as Hekate or Ge.<sup>29</sup> Hekate also appears as the *kourotrophos* in the later 'Orphic' hymns,<sup>30</sup> showing that this is a cultic attribute that is understood as belonging to Hekate from Hesiod and throughout the classical period.

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<sup>25</sup> Beekes 2010: 396.

<sup>26</sup> Hadzisteliou Price 1978: 8, 111.

<sup>27</sup> Hes. *Th.* 450-452.

<sup>28</sup> Toynbee 1929: 123.

<sup>29</sup> Toynbee 1929: 152.

<sup>30</sup> Orph. *Hymn.* 1.8, 12.8.

### Hekate as Mediator

In the *Theogony*, Hekate is the last born of the Titanic gods, save for Iapetus, and the passage praising her comes directly before the narrative of Zeus' birth. The new ruler of the gods allows, we are told, Hekate to keep her prominent position among the gods even though she is of Titanic origin. Thus, both in terms of her position in the text and her position in the cosmogony, Hekate acts as an intermediary between the old, Titanic, gods and the new, Olympic, gods. This is the first hint to the goddess' role as an intermediary, and this is an attribute which is found in other literary and cultic contexts as well. Alongside this, Hekate is shown working closely with other gods – and particularly, it must be noted, Olympic gods – in order to bring about success for human worshipers, pointing once again to her intermediary aspect. The two examples provided in the poem are her work with Poseidon and Hermes:

καὶ τοῖς, οἳ γλαυκὴν δυσπέραστον ἐργάζονται,  
εὖχονται δ' Ἑκάτη καὶ Ἑρικτύπῳ ἐννοσιγαίῳ,  
ῥηϊδίως ἄγρην κυδρὴ θεὸς ὥπασε πολλήν,  
ῥεῖα δ' ἀφείλετο φαινομένην, ἐθέλουσά γε θυμῷ.  
ἔσθλῃ δ' ἐν σταθμοῖσι σὺν Ἑρμῇ ληϊδ' ἀέξειν:  
βουκολίας δὲ βοῶν τε καὶ αἰπόλια πλατέ' αἰγῶν  
ποίμνας τ' εἰροπόκων ὄϊων, θυμῷ γ' ἐθέλουσα,  
ἐξ ὀλίγων βριάει καὶ πολλῶν μείονα θῆκεν.

And upon those who work the bright, storm-tossed sea and pray to Hekate and the loud-sounding Earth-shaker, the illustrious goddess easily bestows a big haul of fish, and easily she takes it away once it has been seen, if she so wishes in her spirit. And she is good in the stables at increasing the livestock together with Hermes; and the herds and droves of cattle, and the broad flocks of goats and the flocks of woolly sheep, if in her spirit she so wishes, from a few she strengthens them and from many she makes them fewer.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Hes. *Th.* 440-447. trans. Most.

This passage demonstrates how and why Hekate has been given a share of the earth, sky, and sea.<sup>32</sup> She cannot personally ensure that fishermen will receive a 'great haul' – she can *assist* in ensuring success if she is called upon, but only if Poseidon is also predisposed and if she is willing to provide success to the mortal in question. She may just as easily, according to the poem, take away the fisherman's success. We see this concept repeated in her aptitude for granting success, or to ensuring failure, in cattle herders, in conjunction with Hermes. Thus we find that she alone cannot make fishermen's hauls plentiful, nor farmers' cattle, sheep, or goats flocks swell in size; however, she is able to effect these outcomes in collaboration with the god who directly presides over that aspect of the world – here, Poseidon for the sea, Hermes for flocks. Her ability to influence outcomes, but only in partnership with another divinity, is mirrored in her capacity to work within the realms of earth, sky, and sea without exercising direct control over any single area.

Through these partnerships, Hekate is acting as an intermediary between the divine and the mortal worshiper, to ensure the success of their venture if she is invoked correctly and is amenable. West describes this process as Poseidon and Hermes 'aid[ing] the goddess when she answers men's prayers concerning fishing and farming respectively', but, following more closely Hesiod's texts, and the argument set out by Clay, it is Hekate who aids the worshiper by putting their case, as it were, to the specialist divinity. Therefore, it is not the other god who is helping Hekate, but she who is assisting the mortal in soliciting the divinity. Similarly, when Hekate gives men in battle *víkē* (victory) and *kūdos* (glory) she is mediating a function of Zeus, namely the glorification of soldiers.<sup>33</sup> What this means is that, as Clay sets out:

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<sup>32</sup> It bears noting that Hesiod himself emphasises that Hekate does not receive these honours, but a *share* of them, and that this is repeated several times, e.g. 413, 426. cf. Clay 1984: 31.

<sup>33</sup> cf. Clay 1984: 33; D. R. West 1995: 195.

I pray to Hermes to increase my flocks or to Zeus for victory. Both Hermes and Zeus surely have the requisite power to accomplish my wish; yet my prayer may or may not be answered. Something has intervened to bring about my success or failure. That something is, in fact, Hecate. If I have been successful, it is because of the propitious conjunction of Hecate and some other god; it is *by the will* of Zeus, ἔκητι Διός, or another divinity, and Hecate has played her role as intermediary.<sup>34</sup>

#### Hecate, the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* and Eleusis

Hecate appears in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* on three occasions; twice towards the beginning of the poem and once at the end. These appearances can appear intrusive in the narrative, but they clearly establish Hecate's role as a transitionary and intermediary goddess.<sup>35</sup> In the first occurrence Persephone has just been carried off by Hades, screaming, but two gods – Hecate and Helios – hear the young goddess' cries:

οὐδέ τις ἀθανάτων οὐδέ θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων  
ἤκουσεν φωνῆς, οὐδ' ἀγλαόκαρποι ἐλαῖαι,  
εἰ μὴ Περσαίου θυγάτηρ ἀταλὰ φρονέουσα  
ᾄεν ἔξ ἄντρου Ἑκάτη λιπαροκρήδεμνος,  
Ἥελιός τε ἄναξ Ὑπερίονος ἀγλαὸς υἱός,  
κούρης κεκλομένης πατέρα Κρονίδην:

But no one heard her voice, none of the immortals or of mortal men, nor yet the olive trees with their resplendent fruit – except that of Persaios' daughter still innocent of heart, Hecate of the glossy veil, heard from her cave, and so did the lord Helios, Hyperionos' resplendent son, was seated apart, away from the gods as the maiden called upon her father, Kronos' son.<sup>36</sup>

This passage can give us two indications of Hecate's so-called 'chthonic' nature. The first is the fact that she was dwelling in a cave when she first heard Persephone's cry

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<sup>34</sup> Clay 1984: 35. cf. D. R. West 1995: 195.

<sup>35</sup> Johnston 1990: 22.

<sup>36</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 23-27. trans. West. (with amendments).

for help. Caves were often considered to be entrances to the Underworld and could sometimes have been *nekyomanteia*,<sup>37</sup> and Hekate's cave-dwelling indicates that she lives in a liminal space between the mortal world and the netherworld. Caves, particularly to mankind, are an unknown quantity; they may be difficult to enter or traverse, they may be dark and disorienting, and, as Ustinova concludes, 'the frightening cave environment is therefore most suitable for rites of passage'.<sup>38</sup> Entering a cave is akin to crossing a threshold, and this is often imagined as the threshold between the mortal and nether worlds. As the hymn depicts a rite-of-passage for the young Persephone – her marriage – Hekate's initial cave-dwelling is both appropriate for her position, and important for Persephone's transition. Hekate will be instrumental in Persephone's rescue, not in entering the 'cave' of the netherworld, but rather in the young maiden's successful navigation through the Underworld, and out the other side. In this way, Hekate acts as Persephone's guide and this, as we shall see below, forms one of Hekate's more prominent cultic aspects.

The second indicator of Hekate's 'chthonic' nature is Helios' presence in the hymn, and the juxtaposition created between the cave-dwelling Hekate and the god of the sun. Helios actually sees Persephone's abduction, while Hekate hears it; he only offers up information when directly questioned by Demeter, but Hekate specifically seeks her out. The opposition created between the god of the sun, who lives in the sky and shines down on the earth – never penetrating the Underworld, and thus the antithesis of the chthonic – and Hekate shows that the goddess is of the Underworld.<sup>39</sup> D. West suggests that the poet included these two divinities specifically because of the juxtaposition they created between the mortal world, where Persephone was picking flowers when she was snatched away, and the netherworld, where the young goddess was taken following her abduction.

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<sup>37</sup> For further discussion, see appendix four.

<sup>38</sup> Ustinova 2009: 32.

<sup>39</sup> D. R. West 1995: 191.

Hekate's second appearance in the hymn occurs after Demeter has been wandering the earth for nine days looking for Persephone:

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ δεκάτῃ οἱ ἐπήλυθε φαινολὶς Ἡὼς  
ἦν τετό οἱ Ἑκάτῃ σέλας ἐν χείρεσσιν ἔχουσα,  
καὶ ῥά οἱ ἀγγελέουσα ἔπος φάτο φώνησέν τε:  
πότνια Δημήτηρ ὠρηφόρε ἀγλαόδωρε  
τίς θεῶν οὐρανίων ἢ ἐθνητῶν ἀνθρώπων  
ἥρπασε Περσεφόνην καὶ σὸν φίλον ἥκαχε θυμόν;  
φωνῆς γὰρ ἤκουσ', ἀτὰρ οὐκ ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν  
ὅς τις ἔην: σοὶ δ' ὦκα λέγω νημερτέα πάντα.  
ὥς ἄρ' ἔφη Ἑκάτῃ: τὴν δ' οὐκ ἡμείβετο μύθῳ  
Ῥείης ἡϋκόμου θυγάτηρ, ἀλλ' ὦκα σὺν αὐτῇ  
ἦϊξ' αἰθομένας δαΐδας μετὰ χερσὶν ἔχουσα.

But when the tenth bright dawn came upon her, Hekate met her with a light in her hand, and spoke to give her news:

"Lady Demeter, bringer of resplendent gifts in season, who of the heavenly gods or of mortal men had seized Persephone and grieved your dear heart? I heard her voice, but I did not see who it was. I am telling you promptly of the whole truth of it."

So spoke Hekate; but lovely haired Rhea's daughter said nothing in answer, but quickly ran to her, with burning torches in her hands.<sup>40</sup>

Here the goddess tells Demeter what she recalls: that she heard Persephone's voice crying out but did not see anything. Following her pronouncement, Hekate swiftly darted away (αἰίσσω), with her torches held high. Richardson suggests that σέλας ἐν χείρεσσιν ἔχουσα ('holding a torch in her hands')<sup>41</sup> implies that there were two torches, in line with later representations of the goddess holding a torch in each hand.<sup>42</sup> The passage does not give new information to the reader, but highlights Hekate's prominent role in Persephone's abduction and eventual return.

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<sup>40</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 51-61. trans. West.

<sup>41</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 52.

<sup>42</sup> Richardson 1974: 169. For examples of representations of the goddess holding a torch in each hand see *LIMC* s.v. Hekate 20, 21, 22, 32, 46, 45, 47, 48, 51, 65, 69, 74.

Hekate's third appearance in the hymn occurs after Persephone has been returned to her mother from the Underworld:

τῇσιν δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθ' Ἑκάτη λιπαροκρήδεμνος,  
πολλὰ δ' ἄρ' ἀμφαγάπησε κόρην Δημήτερος ἄγνῆς;  
ἐκ τοῦ οἱ πρόπολος καὶ ὀπάων ἔπλετ' ἄνασσα.

Hekate, she of the glittering veil joined them,  
Frequently embraced the daughter of holy Demeter.  
Henceforth that lady became her handmaiden and servant.<sup>43</sup>

In this passage we finally see Persephone returned, and Hekate is turned into both her 'preceder' (πρόπολος) and her 'follower' (ὀπάων). Both these terms could, taken literally, simply indicate that Hekate became Persephone's attendant, but their combined use creates a contradictory picture. This contradiction is unimportant given Hekate's position in Persephone's retinue: she is now guiding and guarding the young goddess as thoroughly as possible – 'from behind' and 'in front' and therefore 'all around'. It may be that this is part of Hekate's psychopompic function in Persephone's story: that she is able to guide Persephone down into the Underworld, when the time comes each year, and back to the mortal world when her time below is complete. Thus, she leads the young goddess into the Underworld and follows her home from the Underworld, so that Hekate, the cave-dwelling goddess, is always situated between the young maiden and the Underworld, whether that necessitates leading or following. The literal meaning of the words πρόπολος and ὀπάων indicate a physical journey on which Hekate accompanies the young maiden, in this case her journey home from the Underworld. In the later version of this narrative told by Kallimachos, Hekate's role in Persephone's *katabasis* is much larger, making it explicit that she accompanies Persephone into the Underworld.<sup>44</sup> And so Hekate assists the young goddess as she assisted her mother

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<sup>43</sup> h.Hom. *Dem.* 439-441.

<sup>44</sup> Kall. *fr.* 466 (Kern).



in the upper world.<sup>45</sup> There are several iconographic examples showing Hekate leading Persephone up from the Underworld.<sup>46</sup>

However, there is no indication that Hekate was worshiped at Eleusis, in any guise.<sup>47</sup> There are no inscriptions bearing her name and no clearly identifiable temple. Clinton refutes some of the suspected evidence of Hekate worship at Eleusis, namely the temple of Artemis Propylaia.<sup>48</sup> Further to this, the fact that the temple of Hekate in Athens may have been located at the Propylaia of the Acropolis, and that the hymn denotes a transitional function for the goddess that would be appropriate for a divinity with the epithet 'Propylaia' does not indicate that the temple here was a temple of Hekate at any stage, nor does the goddess' association with Artemis in later literature.<sup>49</sup> The greatest evidence for Hekate worship at Eleusis is the so-called 'running maiden' pediment statue which was identified as Hekate by Edwards in 1986.<sup>50</sup> This was based on the iconographic attributes of Hekate elsewhere including the well-known namesake bell krater by the Persephone painter depicting the young goddesses' return from the Underworld.<sup>51</sup>

### Hekate in Cult

There is little evidence for cults of Hekate in the Greek world, although Pausanias mentions several, and there is some scarce archaeological material. None of these cults point to any aspectually-chthonic substantiation of the goddess. This appears to agree with the early literary evidence of the goddess as not related to the Underworld in any meaningful way.

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<sup>45</sup> Zografou 2010: 69. cf. Foley 1994: 131.

<sup>46</sup> For example, an Attic red-figure bell krater, attributed to the Persephone painter from c. 440, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund 28.57.23; see Foley 1994: fig. 4. cf. Richardson 1974: 294-95.

<sup>47</sup> Clinton 1986: 45, 1992: 33, 116.

<sup>48</sup> Clinton 1986: 116. cf. von Rudloff 1999: 37-38. Von Rudloff believes that this temple does indicate Hekate worship at Eleusis.

<sup>49</sup> Scholars who have argued this include Edwards 1986: 316; Kraus 1960: 63, 96; Richardson 1974: 295; Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1931: 167.

<sup>50</sup> Edwards 1986. See plate 19, fig. 4 for artist's reconstruction of the statue. cf. *LIMC* s.v. Hekate 16.

<sup>51</sup> Edwards 1986: 308. See plate 21, fig. 9 for images of the bell krater.

There is a sacred precinct of Hekate in Selinus,<sup>52</sup> on Sicily, which is located next to the propylaia of the main sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros.<sup>53</sup> This site probably initially dates to the second half of the seventh-century, and it was certainly in use by the sixth-century. There is no literary evidence for the site or any ritual activity, and identification with Hekate is only probable, not confirmed. The placement of the site, along with the association with the entranceway guardianship, is reminiscent of the placement of the temple at Eleusis which Von Rudloff and others have identified as being a temple of Hekate prior to its dedication to Artemis, as discussed above.

The oldest known statue of Hekate comes from Athens and dates to the sixth century.<sup>54</sup> It is a twenty-centimetre tall terracotta votive statuette, showing the goddess enthroned and crowned. She is identified by an inscription, which reads ΑΙΓΟΝ ΑΝΑΘΕΚΕΝ ΘΕΚΑΤΕΙ ('Aigon dedicates [this] to Hekate'). This small statue does not tell us much about the goddess' cult, but it does show that there was dedication to Hekate in Athens at the time. In Athens she was worshiped at the Propylaia of the Acropolis under the guise of ἐπιπυργιδία, possibly near to the temple of the wingless Nike.<sup>55</sup> This is, reportedly, where Alkamenes' infamous triple headed statue was placed; this statue was the first to depict the goddess in the triple form, around 430.<sup>56</sup> All of our information about this statue of the goddess, whose epithet is formed from an elision of ἐπί and πύργος, and meaning 'on the tower', comes from Pausanias.<sup>57</sup>

There is some literary evidence that the Athenian cult of Hekate was more widespread. In the most famous example of this, Aristophanes, in the 422 production of *Wasps*, has a character proclaim:

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<sup>52</sup> Yavis 1949: 77; Zuntz 1971: 98.

<sup>53</sup> On the sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros, including dates, see Yavis 1949: 110-15.

<sup>54</sup> Berlin Antiquarium TC7729.

<sup>55</sup> This is related by Pausanias (2.30.2), who says that the Athenians called this image of the goddess Epipyrgidia – 'on the tower'. cf. Zografou 2010: 102, 64.

<sup>56</sup> Kraus 1960: 84.

<sup>57</sup> Examples of the triple-headed Hekate can be found at *LIMC* s.v. Hekate 115-142.

ὄρα τὸ χρῆμα, τὰ λόγι' ὥς περαίνεται.  
ἡκηκὴ γὰρ ὥς Ἀθηναῖοί ποτε  
δικάσσειεν ἐπὶ ταῖς οἰκίαισι τὰς δίκας,  
κάν τοῖς προθύροις ἐνοικοδομήσοι πᾶς ἀνὴρ  
αὐτῷ δικαστηρίδιον μικρὸν πάνυ,  
ὥσπερ Ἑκάταιον, πανταχοῦ πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν.

Lo and behold, the prophecies come true. I'd heard that some day the Athenians would judge cases in their very houses, and that every man would build himself an itty bitty law court in his yard; they'd be on doorsteps everywhere, like shrines of Hekate.<sup>58</sup>

Kraus comments that, as this passage suggests, there might have been a widespread habit of setting up Hekate statuettes in front of houses.<sup>59</sup> Von Rudloff agrees, suggesting that these Hekate-shrines were Herm-like in function, and were connected with a well-established aspect of Athenian Hekate as a goddess who protected entranceways, as evidenced by her probable place at the Propylaia, the gateway to the Akropolis.<sup>60</sup> Alkamenēs' three-headed Hekate might have preceded this, as the Propylaia was finished around ten years before the production of the play,<sup>61</sup> however, the character, Philokleon, is commenting that 'someday' (ποτέ) the Athenians would set up such shrines, and that they would be 'similar to' or 'like' (ὥσπερ) the Hekataion, not that they would be shrines of Hekate nor that this was something which was a wide-spread practice in Aristophanes' time. There is little evidence for any such statues or shrines prior to the fourth century,<sup>62</sup> and they are certainly not sufficiently widespread to indicate one at each house. There is only one other literary indication of this, from a fragment of Aischylos that reads δέσποιν' Ἑκάτη, τῶν βασιλείων πρόδομος μελάθρων ('Lady Hekate, you who dwell in front of the royal palace').<sup>63</sup> Sommerstein comments, in the Loeb volume, that 'shrines of Hekate were frequently placed outside house doors' which indicates that this has

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<sup>58</sup> Aristoph. *Wasps*. 799-804. trans. Henderson.

<sup>59</sup> Kraus 1960: 105.

<sup>60</sup> von Rudloff 1999: 93.

<sup>61</sup> E. B. Harrison 1965: 96.

<sup>62</sup> E. B. Harrison 1965: 96.

<sup>63</sup> Aisch. fr. 388 (Sommerstein).

become a commonly accepted fact of Athenian life, for which there is no evidence. What this fragment does show is that there was a commonly accepted idea of Hekate as a protector of entranceways as early as Aischylos' time, and that this was important enough to be considered appropriate for a royal house.

Further to this, Pausanias mentions two cults in Corinth in which Hekate was worshiped in some capacity, the first in a small town called Titane where, he says, Helios' brother Titan first lived.<sup>64</sup> In the temple of Asklepios there was a statue of the goddess, situated among many other gods; this statue was located in the portico of the temple, along with those of Dionysos, Aphrodite, 'Mother of the Gods' and Tyche. Hekate shares no specific relationship with Asklepios, but interestingly does, in part, share a name with Apollo, Asklepios' father. Apollo is named numerous times in literature with the *Hekat*-root epithets ἑκατος ('far shooting'), ἑκατηβόλος ('far darting') and ἑκηβόλος ('attaining his aim').<sup>65</sup> As there is no convincing etymology for Hekate's name, we cannot draw any truly meaningful conclusions from this fact, and it may indeed just be coincidence that the two divinities share this common name origin, as well as connections to Artemis. Furthermore, according to Hesiod's Theogony, Apollo and Hekate were cousins, as their mothers Leto and Asteria were sisters. There is also an altar of Hekate in the precinct of Apollo Delphinios on Miletus, with a dedication by the three prytaneis that dates to the sixth century. Yavis thinks the actual altar may be older than this, however.<sup>66</sup> The inscription reads:

.....  
ΕΟΘΡΑΣ.....  
..ΛΕΩΔΑΜΑΣ  
ΟΝΑΞΟ ΠΡΥΤ[Α]  
ΝΕΥΟΝΤΕΣ Α-  
ΝΕΘΕΣΑΝ ΤΗ-

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<sup>64</sup> Paus. 2.11.5.

<sup>65</sup> e.g. h. Hom. *Ap.* 1, 56, 63, 90, 134, et. al.; h. Hom. *Herm.* 18; h. Hom. *Hest.* 1; h. Hom. *Mus. Ap.* 2; Hes. *Sh.* 100; Hom. *Il.* 1.14-15, 21, 74, 369 et. al., Aisch. *Eum.* 626; Pind. *Pyth.* 9. 26-27; etc. cf. Burkert 1985: 146.

<sup>66</sup> Yavis 1949: 137.

KATEI

the prytaneis Eothras, Leodamas, and Onaxo, as promised, dedicate [this] to Hekate.<sup>67</sup>

In Argos there was a temple of Hekate which was located next to the temple of Eilethia, the goddess of childbirth. Here there were two cult statues, one made of bronze and the other of stone.<sup>68</sup> This is the only temple of Hekate which we know with reasonable certainty existed in antiquity.<sup>69</sup> We do not know, however, which site came into use first,<sup>70</sup> and so cannot say whether this was an association made to Eilethia or the other way around. The connection to Eilethia, the childbirth goddess, is understandable if we take Hekate in her function as *kourotrophos*, a nursing divinity. Pausanias tells us that the temple of Eilethia here was dedicated by Helen of Sparta on the occasion of the birth of her daughter Iphigeneia,<sup>71</sup> who was subsequently adopted by her sister Klytaimnestra. And, Hekate has a stronger connection to Iphigeneia through the goddess Artemis. We know very little about the Hekate cult in Argos, beyond the connection with Eilethia and the (assumed) role as *kourotrophos* which this connection implies.

The two places which we might expect to find some kind of Hekate cult are Hesiod's homeland of Boiotia and Thessaly, which is sometimes associated with her origin. Neither have any identifiable cult presence for the goddess. Von Rudloff suggests that it might be the connection to ancient portrayals of Thessalian witches,<sup>72</sup> including Medea, which spurs on this particular connection, rather than

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<sup>67</sup> Kawerau and Rehm 1914: no. 129. cf. Kraus 1960: 11. Kraus relates that this altar was in use well into the first century, being rededicated by Pausanias, Son of Metrodor around 78/77.

<sup>68</sup> Paus. 2.22.7.

<sup>69</sup> Tomlinson 1972: 214.

<sup>70</sup> von Rudloff 1999: 40.

<sup>71</sup> Paus. 2.22.7.

<sup>72</sup> e.g. Aristoph. *Clouds*. 749; Plut. *Mor.* 400b, 416f; Plato *Gorgias* 513a; Horace *Epodes* 5.46; Lucan *BC*.6.438; Propertius 1.19; Polyainos 8.43.

any specific link between Thessaly and Hekate.<sup>73</sup> There might also be a cultic link between the goddess and Aigina, of which Pausanias says:

θεῶν δὲ Αἰγινήται τιμῶσιν Ἑκάτην μάλιστα καὶ τελετὴν ἄγουσιν  
ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος Ἑκάτης, Ὀρφέα σφίσι τὸν Θρᾷκα καταστήσασθαι τὴν  
τελετὴν λέγοντες. τοῦ περιβόλου δὲ ἐντὸς ναός ἐστι, ξόανον δὲ  
ἔργον Μύρωνος, ὁμοίως ἐν πρόσωπόν τε καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν σῶμα.

The goddess the Aiginetans particularly honour is Hekate; they celebrate her mystery every year, saying Orpheus of Thrace established it. Inside the enclosure is a shrine with a wooden idol by Myron: it has only one face and the rest of the body in keeping.<sup>74</sup>

However, there is no pre-Roman archaeological evidence for a temple of Hekate on the island, and so we cannot be sure if there was cult activity here. By the end of the fifth century, the local goddess, Aphaia, was absorbed into the functions of Artemis and Athena,<sup>75</sup> and there is no trace of connection to Hekate.

Farnell suggested that Hekate's origins could be found in Thrace,<sup>76</sup> and there is some evidence for cultic worship of Hekate here as early as the sixth century. There is, for example, a fragment of a Pindaric hymn to the city of Abdera which states:

ἐν δὲ μηνὸς  
πρῶτον τύχεν ἄμαρ·  
ἄγγελλε δὲ φοινικόπεζα λόγον παρθένος  
εὐμενῆς Ἑκάτα  
τὸν ἐθέλοντα γενέσθαι.

That day fell  
on the first of the month,  
and Hekate, the maiden with ruddy feet,  
was graciously announcing her prophecy  
eager for fulfilment.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> von Rudloff 1999: 45.

<sup>74</sup> Paus. 2.30.2.

<sup>75</sup> von Rudloff 1999: 40.

<sup>76</sup> Farnell 1896: 508.

<sup>77</sup> Pind. *Pae.* 2. 75-79. trans. W.H. Race.

Kraus takes this as evidence for cult of the goddess here,<sup>78</sup> stating that because this is the only mention of the goddess in Pindar it must indicate that she was an important goddess for the city, since she clearly was not an important goddess for Pindar's own religious leanings. In the hymn she predicts a decisive victory for the city at Mount Melamphyllon. As the goddess does not have a strong oracular function elsewhere, this give further evidence to the importance that Hekate plays for Abdera.

### Hekate at the Liminal

Hekate is not only associated with the metaphysical liminal space between the Underworld and the mortal world but also with the much more mundane liminal spaces of the world – crossroads, thresholds, doorways, and the like,<sup>79</sup> spaces that represent a 'break' in the organised mortal world.<sup>80</sup> We have already seen this in the Hekate situated on the Propylaia of the Acropolis. The epithet Ἑνοδία ('of the road') is applied to her regularly in cult and in literature. Although it may be used to describe other divinities, in Hekate's case it can also be used as a substantive name.<sup>81</sup> Specifically of Hekate it describes the meeting of three roads. Similarly, she is also described with the adjective τριοδίτις, related to dwelling at crossroads.

The desire to worship divinity in liminal spaces may represent one of several different concerns: the establishment of territorial limits and the protection of their contents, metaphysical liminal points, or boundaries that represent endings and beginnings. That is, Johnston comments, 'points at which one departs from one place to another. Passage through a door or gate can initiate an earthly journey, for instance, or reflect the symbolic passage from one mode of life to another, just as passage into the earth initiates Persephone's yearly journey to the Underworld

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<sup>78</sup> Kraus 1960: 65.

<sup>79</sup> Johnston 1990: 23.

<sup>80</sup> Johnston 1991: 218. see also Burkert 1979, 1983; Douglas 1966.

<sup>81</sup> Johnston 1990: 24.

and the annual renewal of her marriage to Hades...'<sup>82</sup> The third concern faced by the mortal in worshiping liminal divinities relates to locating the liminal space – as being separate from its surroundings – itself. The physical liminal space – the gateway or doorway, the threshold, crossroads or frontier – is, by definition, not attached to either of the concrete sides of it. On this, Johnston says: 'a threshold is neither inside nor outside of the house, a frontier belongs to neither country, the crossroads are the junction of roads A, B, and C but belong to none of them; liminal places, especially crossroads, offer varied options but not reassuring certainties'.<sup>83</sup>

This final point, that the liminal does not belong to either of the states that surround it may remind us that Hekate too, according to Hesiod, does not belong to any one sphere of influence, but her honours extend though the earth, sky, and waters. She can initiate change throughout the world, and although Hesiod does not explicitly mention the Underworld in her sphere of influence, its inclusion is made clear by iconographical representations of her acting as psychopomp. The cave, her mythical dwelling in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, is itself a liminal space between the worlds of the dead and the living. One of the most significant ways in which Hekate is worshiped involves crossroads as a physical manifestation of liminal space, where she is offered 'suppers'.<sup>84</sup>

#### Hekate, Demeter and Persephone

Hekate has a strong connection with Demeter and Persephone/Kore, and there is an allusion to the goddess in a part of one of the 'Orphic' fragments:

ἡ δ' ἄρα δι' Ἑκάτη παιδὸς μέλη' αὔθι λιποῦσα  
Λητοῦς εὐπολοκάμοιο κόρη προσεβήσατ' Ὀλυμπον

Straightaway divine Hekate, the daughter of lovely-haired Leto,  
approached Olympus, leaving behind the limbs of the child.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Johnston 1990: 25.

<sup>83</sup> Johnston 1990: 25.

<sup>84</sup> Johnston 1991: 217.

<sup>85</sup> *OF* 317; cf. Johnston 2011: 123. trans. Johnston.



This is usually placed into the *Rhapsodic Theogony*<sup>86</sup> and Bernabé specifically situates it into Dionysos' birth story,<sup>87</sup> where the παιδὸς μέλη clearly refers to the dismemberment of the infant god in Orphic mythology.<sup>88</sup> Leaving aside, as Johnston does, the issue of Leto's daughter most usually being Artemis, and any link between Artemis and Hekate,<sup>89</sup> there is the question of what Hekate is doing in this poem, and what connection, if any, there is to Persephone here. Obviously, in 'Orphic' myth, Dionysos is Persephone's child, and his loss story might invoke another infamous lost-child story; namely, that of Demeter and Persephone. On this, Johnston comments, 'the story of Demeter underpinned the Eleusinian mystery cult, which was already thriving at the time that the new myth of Dionysos emerged; the similarity between the two myths implicitly aligned the newer mystery cult with the older one'.<sup>90</sup> In part, Johnston situates the creation of this mythic narrative in the context of its relationship to past narratives which might lend it some credibility, and the link between Hekate and Persephone is one of these. Because Hekate was involved in the Persephone's retrieval, it might have been useful for the legitimacy of the 'Orphic' Dionysos birth-story to include the goddess, and this provided an opportune time to have her enter the story at a similar part of the narrative. That

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<sup>86</sup> for example, M. L. West 1983: 267.

<sup>87</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 41. cf. Johnston 2011: 123.

<sup>88</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007: 67.

<sup>89</sup> On this issue, Johnston says:

'This is a topic that Proclus takes up in several places, as Bernabé and Kern note in their commentaries. Relevant, too, is *OF* 400 (=41 K. and cf. 42 K.), where Hekate is said to be the daughter of Deo, a tradition reflected in other ancient sources, as cited by Bernabé and Kern. On the strength of *OF* 400, West (1983: 267) attractively suggested emending Λητοῦς in *OF* 317 to Δηοῦς – which could be supported further by the facts that Demeter is called εὐπλόκαμος at *Od.* 5.125; that Cornutus transmitted εὐπλόκαμος Δημήτηρ instead of εὐστέφανος Δημήτηρ for Hes. *Op.* 300 (*ND* 56.5); and that Demeter is called καλλιπλόκαμος at *Il.* 14.326... The argument against West's emendation are that Proclus, at least, had a manuscript reading Λητοῦς in front of him, and that ancient authors were familiar with the idea that Hekate and Artemis were to be identified (that is, there is no compelling reason to emend the reading)'.

<sup>90</sup> Johnston 2011: 124.

is, that she could come into the 'feast' of Dionysos, and leave abruptly (as the fragment comments) in order to make it known what was happening.<sup>91</sup>

### Conclusion

Although there is a strong connection between Hekate and the Underworld, even in archaic and classical times, this does not translate into Hekate being aspectually 'chthonic' or associated with the Underworld in any truly meaningful way in cult or literature of the archaic and classical periods. Her strong role as a mediator between the Olympian and Titanic gods hints at her primary function in these periods. Alongside this, the provision in Hesiod's *Theogony* that she mediated between the gods and mortals, in which she was invoked to assist a person's request to another god, demonstrates this function. Hekate has a strong association with both physical and metaphysical liminal spaces and thresholds. This may be rendered as the ability to manipulate the workings of the gods on the borders of the three earthly realms (and, perhaps, also the Underworld).

Hekate's cult presence is small in the archaic and classical periods, and there is very little archaeological evidence for her worship, particularly in any kind of death or Underworld-related contexts. There is no evidence for Hekate worship at Eleusis, even with the evidence of the 'running maiden'. Hekate should not be considered an Underworld goddess in the archaic and classical periods. Beyond her connection to Persephone in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* she serves no other 'chthonic' functions. This is true both in the literature and in her cultic presence.

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<sup>91</sup> Johnston 2011: 124.

## 7: The Moirai and Keres, The Fate and Doom of Death

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Characterisation of fate is a contentious subject even within ancient literature, particularly ideas involving issues arising from ideas of who controls man's destiny. In some literary examples, such as the *kerostasia*<sup>1</sup> – the weighing up of Keres, the Dooms of Fate or Death – of book twenty-two of the *Iliad*, it superficially appears as though Zeus has no influence over the destinies of Achilles and Hektor:

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον ἐπὶ κρουνοὺς ἀφίκοντο,  
καὶ τότε δὴ χρύσεια πατήρ ἐτίταινε τάλαντα,  
ἐν δ' ἐτίθει δύο κῆρε τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο,  
τὴν μὲν Ἀχιλλῆος, τὴν δ' Ἑκτορος ἵπποδάμοιο,  
ἔλκε δὲ μέσσα λαβῶν: ῥέπε δ' Ἑκτορος αἴσιμον ἦμαρ,  
ᾧχετο δ' εἰς Ἀἴδαο, λίπεν δέ ἐ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων.

But when for the fourth time they had come to the springs, then it was that the father lifted up his golden scales, and set in them two keres of grievous death, one for Achilles, and one for horse-taming Hektor; then he grasped the balance by the middle and raised it; and down sank the day of doom of Hektor and went away to Hades; and Phoibos Apollo left him.<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere in the *Iliad* it appears as though the gods, or at least Zeus, have the ability to control men's fates, or even that Zeus himself is the forger of fate. Another Iliadic *kerostasia* hints at this power to manipulate fate:

καὶ τότε δὴ χρύσεια πατήρ ἐτίταινε τάλαντα:  
ἐν δ' ἐτίθει δύο κῆρε τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο  
Τρώων θ' ἵπποδάμων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων,

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<sup>1</sup> The more popular classical-era 'version' of this concept, the *psychostasia* or the weighing of souls, is not truly comparable to *kerostasia*. A person's Ker embodies not only their fated *time* to die but plays an active role in their death and each person's mode of death. The *psychostasia*, which is more representative of a weighing of man's *lives* than their fates, has a connotation that the *kerostasia* does not have. A *kerostasia* would theoretically always provide the same outcome irrespective of a person's actions in life. cf. Morrison 1997: 274 n. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. *Il.* 22.208-213. Translations in this chapter are from the following sources, with amendments, unless otherwise specified: *Iliad* from Murray/Wyatt; *Odyssey* Murray/Dimmock.

ἔλκε δὲ μέσσα λαβών· ῥέπε δ' αἴσιμον ἦμαρ Ἀχαιῶν.  
αἷ μὲν Ἀχαιῶν κῆρες ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ  
ἔζεσθην, Τρώων δὲ πρὸς οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἄερθεν·

then it was that the father lifted up his golden scales, and set in them two keres of grievous death, one for the horse-taming Trojans, and one for the bronze-clad Achaians; then he grasped the balance by the middle and raised it, and down sank the day of doom of the Achaians. So the Achaians' fates settled down on to the bounteous earth and those of the Trojans were raised aloft toward wide heaven.<sup>3</sup>

Taken in isolation, this passage appears to demonstrate the same inability to influence fate that is shown in the book twenty-two *kerostasia*. However, prior to this Achilleus' mother, the sea-nymph Thetis, had petitioned Zeus<sup>4</sup> to honour her son by allowing the Trojans to claim a temporary victory. Zeus commented to Thetis that:

ἦ δὲ καὶ αὖτως μ' αἰεὶ ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι  
νικεῖ, καί τέ μέ φησι μάχῃ Τρώεσσιν ἀρήγειν.  
ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν νῦν αὖτις ἀπόστιχε μή σε νοήσῃ  
Ἥρη· ἐμοὶ δέ κε ταῦτα μελήσεται ὄφρα τελέσσω·  
εἰ δ' ἄγε τοι κεφαλῇ κατανεύσομαι ὄφρα πεποιίθῃς·  
τοῦτο γὰρ ἐξ ἐμέθεν γε μετ' ἀθανάτοισι μέγιστον  
τέκμωρ· οὐ γὰρ ἐμὸν παλινάγρετον οὐδ' ἀπατηλὸν  
οὐδ' ἀτελεύτητον ὃ τί κεν κεφαλῇ κατανεύσω.

As it is she [Hera] constantly reproaches me among the immortal gods, and says that I aid the Trojans in the fighting. But now go back again, in case Hera notices something: and I will take thought to bring these things to pass. Come now, I will bow my head to you, so that you may be certain, for this from me is the surest token among the immortals; no word of mine may be recalled, nor is false, nor unfulfilled, once I bow my head to it.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Hom. *Il.* 8.69-74.

<sup>4</sup> Hom. *Il.* 1.498-530.

<sup>5</sup> Hom. *Il.* 1.520-527.

By bowing his head<sup>6</sup> to Thetis, Zeus, who we learn has been previously accused of siding with the Trojans, is promising that he will bring about Trojan victory, even temporarily. When he later weighs the collective Greek and Trojan *keres* he already knows the outcome and he has a direct hand in bringing it about. Zeus' role in the downfall of the Achaians is made clear elsewhere in the poem, where he is, for example, described as spending all night devising κακὰ... σμερδαλέα κτυπέων ('evil...thundering terrifyingly').<sup>7</sup> References to Zeus' control over the outcome of the war indicate that he does, in fact, influence the deaths of some, if not all, warriors. This includes heroes who die during this particular period of battle,<sup>8</sup> notably Patroklos, and Zeus' own son, Sarpedon. Zeus intricately details his plan to Hera, appearing to be prophesying the future, although this could occur even if he did not hold any direct influence over the events. Taking Zeus' agreement with Thetis and what appeared to be a plan for bringing about the temporary downfall of the Achaians, there might be more inclination to read his statement as a confession rather than a prophesy:

ἥοῦς δὴ καὶ μᾶλλον ὑπερμενέα Κρονίωνα  
 ὄψεαι, αἶ κ' ἐθέλησθα, βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη,  
 ὀλλύντ' Ἀργείων πουλὺν στρατὸν αἰχμητῶν:  
 οὐ γὰρ πρὶν πολέμου ἀποπαύσεται ὄβριμος Ἑκτωρ  
 πρὶν ὄρθαι παρὰ ναῦφι ποδώκεα Πηλεΐωνα,  
 ἥματι τῷ ὅτ' ἂν οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ πρύμνῃσι μάχωνται  
 στείνει ἐν αἰνοτάτῳ περὶ Πατρόκλοιο θανόντος:  
 ὥς γὰρ θέσφατόν ἐστι.

At dawn you will see, if you wish, ox-eyed queenly Hera, the most  
 mighty son of Kronos wreaking more destruction on the great army

<sup>6</sup> This isn't the only instance of Zeus' head-bowing being taken as a guarantee of his word. In book 9, for example, Agamemnon says to the Argives, ὦ φίλοι Ἀργείων ἡγήτορες ἡδὲ μέδοντες, Ζεὺς με μέγα Κρονίδης ἄτη ἐνέδησε βαρείῃ σκέτλιος, ὃς πρὶν μὲν μοι ὑπέσχετο καὶ κατένευσεν Ἴλιον ἐκπέρσαντ' εὐτείχεον ἀπονέεσθαι ('My friends, leaders and councillors of the Argives, great Zeus, son of Kronos, has ensnared me in grievous blindness of heart, hard god, who at one time promised me, and nodded his head to it, that only after sacking well-walled Ilios would I return home...'). *Il.* 9.17-20. trans. Murray/Wyatt. See also Boegehold 1999: 13, cf. 61-62.

<sup>7</sup> *Hom. Il.* 7.477-479.

<sup>8</sup> That is, from the time Thetis implores Zeus to help her cause to the time that Achilles re-enters the battle.

of Argive spearmen; for mighty Hektor will not refrain from battle until the swift-footed son of Peleus has been stirred to action beside his ships on the day when at the sterns of the ships they will be fighting in most dreadful straits over the dead Patroklos; for so it is ordained.<sup>9</sup>

The only indication that this can represent a prophecy, rather than the elucidation of a plan not yet put into action, lies in this final statement – ὥς γὰρ θέσφατόν ἐστι. If the plan truly was conceived by Zeus himself, he would take direct credit for it here, rather than saying *it is* (ἐστίν) so decreed (θέσφατόν). Elsewhere, Zeus does not shy away from taking credit, using phrases like οἶον ἐμόν γε μένος ('such is my might')<sup>10</sup> to describe his involvement in the shaping of the war, so why not here?

Regardless of what is occurring on the divine level in the *Iliad*, a closer look at the actions and beliefs of mortal men reveals something more explicit about the ideas of fate. Whether the gods are themselves subjects of fate, or responsible for dictating mortal fate, they still play a vital role 'as agents of the fulfilment of man's moira'.<sup>11</sup> Mortal men, during the course of the poem, generally pray to the ouranic gods for assistance over their 'lot' but also cast blame onto the Moirai or Keres for their destiny. Hektor, in an example which displays both these mortal characteristics, addresses the Trojan army, saying:

εὖχομαι ἐλπόμενος Διὶ τ' ἄλλοισιν τε θεοῖσιν  
ἐξελάαν ἐνθένδε κύνας κηρεσιφορήτους,  
οὓς κῆρες φορέουσι μελαινάων ἐπὶ νηῶν.

I pray in high hope to Zeus and the other gods to drive out from here these keres-born dogs, whom the keres brought on their black ships.<sup>12</sup>

Hektor's sentiment is fairly obvious: the dogs, urged on by the Keres, are the Achaians who landed on their shores. So, while the Keres brought the Greeks to Troy, Hektor prays to 'Zeus and the other gods' to drive them away.

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<sup>9</sup> Hom. *Il.* 8.470-477.

<sup>10</sup> Hom. *Il.* 8.450.

<sup>11</sup> Tsagarakis 2000: 58.

<sup>12</sup> Hom. *Il.* 8. 526-527.

### Fate and Death

In all these scenes – from the *kerostasiai* to Hektor's prayer – the overarching concept is that fate is intimately connected with death. These concepts are woven together so intricately that they create a connection that goes beyond the idea that death is simply the completion of fate; and this is reinforced throughout the poem. In book three of the *Iliad*, Menelaos elucidates the connection between death and μοῖρα (as a concept of fate as a lot or portion, as opposed to κήρ which is the predestined impending doom of death rather than a complete fate). He proposes a duel, and that either he or Paris was fated to die, and following this fight both armies should walk away from the war. The crux of Menelaos' proposal is δ' ὅπποτέρω θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα τέτυκται τεθναίῃ ('and for whichever of us death and fate are appointed, let him die').<sup>13</sup> In book four, Diores is described as being μοῖρ' ἐπέδησε ('ensnared by fate') when he dies.<sup>14</sup> In book five, Hypsenor is described as having πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή ('heaving death and mighty fate')<sup>15</sup> come upon him. This construction occurs again several times. In book sixteen, for example, Kleoboulos' vision is clouded by πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή,<sup>16</sup> and in book twenty we find Eheklos succumbing to πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή<sup>17</sup> after being fatally struck by Achilles' sword. In book five, Amphios, a man from Paisos fighting for the Trojans, is killed after his μοῖρα leads him to become a Trojan ally.<sup>18</sup> That Homer specifically mentions this on the occasion of Amphios' death suggests that this death, as the end of an allotted portion of life, was intricately tied to the destiny of the war and the events that led Amphios to become involved with it. Book twelve sees Poulydamas attempt to escape the battle, πρόσθεν γάρ μιν μοῖρα δυσώνυμος ἀμφεκάλυψεν ἔγχρῃ

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<sup>13</sup> Hom. *Il.* 3.101-102.

<sup>14</sup> Hom. *Il.* 4.517.

<sup>15</sup> Hom. *Il.* 5.83.

<sup>16</sup> Hom. *Il.* 16.334.

<sup>17</sup> Hom. *Il.* 20.477.

<sup>18</sup> Hom. *Il.* 5.613.

Ἰδομενῆος ('but before that could be, fate, of evil name, enfolded him by the spear of Idomeneus').<sup>19</sup> Peisandros, in book thirteen, prepares to attack Menelaos, τὸν δ' ἄγε μοῖρα κακὴ θανάτοιο τέλοσδε ('but an evil fate was leading him to the doom of death').<sup>20</sup>

In book fifteen it is Ares who, roused with anger over the death of his son, vows to take revenge against the Achaians εἴ πέρ μοι καὶ μοῖρα Διὸς πληγέντι κεραυνῷ κεῖσθαι ὁμοῦ νεκύεσσι μεθ' αἵματι καὶ κονίησιν ('even though it be my fate to be struck with the bolt of Zeus and to lie low in blood and dust among the dead').<sup>21</sup> This threat amounts to the closest thing to death an immortal may have to endure. What is most striking about Ares' claim is that he – and the gods more generally – are, like mortals, subject to fate, and this should not be read as a controversial or exceptional statement. Ares is apparently unaware of the designed Achaean downfall; if he were then why, at this stage of the battle, would he threaten to avenge his son's death when even temporary Achaean downfall is cemented?

In book sixteen, as Patroklos lies dying, he taunts Hektor by saying ἀλλὰ με μοῖρ' ὀλοὴ καὶ Λητοῦς ἔκτανεν υἱός, ἀνδρῶν δ' Εὐφορβος: σὺ δέ με τρίτος ἐξεναρίζεις. ('But it was destructive Moira and the son of Leto who slew me, and of men Euphorbus, while you are only third in my slaying').<sup>22</sup> Although his use of *moira* in derision may not accurately represent the poets' overarching image of fate, its inclusion indicates that it would be considered at least a plausible position to adopt in the views of the audience. This is followed by his dying premonition that Hektor will himself succumb to θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή ('death and mighty fate')<sup>23</sup> at the hands of Achilles. Finally, over Patroklos' slain body the Achaians and Trojans

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<sup>19</sup> Hom. *Il.* 12.116-117.

<sup>20</sup> Hom. *Il.* 13.602.

<sup>21</sup> Hom. *Il.* 15.117-118. In a similar circumstance, but without the mention of fate, when fighting with Athena, Ares was wounded and, similarly, bemoaned that he might have died had it not been for his immortal strength and swiftness for, as he says ἢ τέ κε δηρὸν αὐτοῦ πῆματ' ἔπασχον ἐν αἰνῆσιν νεκάδεσσιν ('otherwise I should long be lying there in pain among the stark dead men'); *Il.* 5.885-886.

<sup>22</sup> Hom. *Il.* 16.849-850.

<sup>23</sup> Hom. *Il.* 16.853.



vow to fight on, with one Trojan warrior proclaiming εἰ καὶ μοῖρα παρ' ἀνέρι τῷδε  
δαμῆναι πάντας ὁμῶς, μή πῶ τις ἔρωείτω πολέμοιο ('though it be our fate all  
together to be slain beside this man, let no one yet draw backward from the fight').<sup>24</sup>  
Like many others, Patroklos' death is described using the phrase θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα  
κιχάνει ('death and fate have come upon him').<sup>25</sup> When Achilles laments his  
companion's death to his mother he mentions that man's fate is even beyond Zeus'  
power to stop:

οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ βίη Ἡρακλῆος φύγε κῆρα,  
ὅς περ φίλτατος ἔσκε Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἄνακτι  
ἀλλὰ ἐ μοῖρ' ἐδάμασσε καὶ ἀργαλέος χόλος Ἥρης.

For not even the mighty Herakles escaped doom, though he was most  
dear to lord Zeus, son of Kronos, but fate overcame him, and the  
painful wrath of Hera.<sup>26</sup>

And so, he continues: ὥς καὶ ἐγὼν, εἰ δὴ μοι ὁμοίη μοῖρα τέτυκται, κείσομ' ἐπεὶ  
κε θάνω ('so also shall I, if a like fate has been fashioned for me, lie when I am  
dead').<sup>27</sup>

Death-related premonitions often include mentions of fate, as we have seen  
in Patroklos' premonition of Hektor's death. Another striking example occurs in  
book nineteen when Achilles' horse, Xanthos states:

καὶ λίην σ' ἔτι νῦν γε σαώσομεν ὄβριμ' Ἀχιλλεῦ:  
ἀλλὰ τοι ἐγγύθεν ἦμαρ ὀλέθριον: οὐδέ τοι ἡμεῖς  
αἴτιοι, ἀλλὰ θεός τε μέγας καὶ Μοῖρα κραταιή.  
οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡμετέρη βραδυτήτι τε νωχελίη τε  
Τρῶες ἀπ' ὤμοϊν Πατρόκλου τεύχε' ἔλοντο:  
ἀλλὰ θεῶν ὤριστος, ὃν ἡὔκομος τέκε Λητώ,  
ἔκταν' ἐνὶ προμάχοισι καὶ Ἕκτορι κῦδος ἔδωκε.  
νῶϊ δὲ καὶ κεν ἅμα πνοιῇ Ζεφύροιο θέοιμεν,  
ἦν περ ἐλαφροτάτην φάσ' ἔμμεναι: ἀλλὰ σοὶ αὐτῷ

<sup>24</sup> Hom. *Il.* 17.421-422.

<sup>25</sup> Hom. *Il.* 17.478, 672. cf. Hom. *Il.* 22.436; 22.303 (where μοῖρα κιχάνει is used alone).

<sup>26</sup> Hom. *Il.* 18.117-119.

<sup>27</sup> Hom. *Il.* 18.120-121.

μόρσιμόν ἐστι θεῶ τε καὶ ἀνέρι ἴφι δαμῆναι.

Yes indeed, still for this time will we save you, mighty Achilles, though the day of doom is near you, nor will we be the cause of it, but a mighty god and overpowering Fate. For it was not through sloth or slackness of ours that the Trojans were able to strip the armour from the shoulders of Patroklos, but one, far the best of gods, he whom fair-haired Leto bore, slew him among the foremost fighters and gave glory to Hektor. But for us two, we could run swift as the West Wind's blast, which, men say, is of all winds the fleetest; but for you yourself it is fated to be vanquished in fight by a god and a mortal.<sup>28</sup>

Achilleus' death will come at the hands of Μοῖρα κραταιή: strong, mighty, overpowering fate. At the very end of his speech Xanthus reiterates that Achilleus' time was drawing to a close; a god and a mortal, together, will overcome him in fighting and that is fated. Moira, thus, compels both a mortal and a god to bend to her will, demonstrating her control over the destiny of man and god alike. Achilleus' fate has more wide-reaching implications than just his own life. For example, Poseidon urges Aineias to retreat whenever he should meet the Greek hero in battle:

Αἰνεία, τίς σ' ὦδε θεῶν ἀτέοντα κελεύει  
ἀντία Πηλεΐωνος ὑπερθύμοιο μάχεσθαι,  
ὃς σεῦ ἅμα κρείσσων καὶ φίλτερος ἀθανάτοισιν;  
ἀλλ' ἀναχωρῆσαι ὅτε κεν συμβλήσεται αὐτῷ,  
μὴ καὶ ὑπὲρ μοῖραν δόμον Ἄϊδος εἰσαφίκηαι.  
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κ' Ἀχιλεὺς θάνατον καὶ πότμον ἐπίσπῃ,  
θαρσήςας δὴ ἔπειτα μετὰ πρῶτοισι μάχεσθαι:  
οὐ μὲν γάρ τίς σ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν ἐξενάριξει.

Aineias, what god is it that urges you in blindness of heart in this way to face in fight the high-hearted son of Peleus, who is a better man than you, and dearer to the immortals? But draw back, whenever you meet him, lest even beyond your fate you reach to the house of Hades. But when Achilles meets his death and fate, then take courage to fight among the foremost, for there is no other of the Achaians who will slay you.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Hom. *Il.* 19.408-417.

<sup>29</sup> Hom. *Il.* 20.332-339.

Once Achilles has met his θάνατος καὶ πότμος ('death and destiny') Aineias should feel confident fighting among the best Greek warriors because, as Poseidon mentions, Achilles is the only Greek warrior who can kill him. What this indicates is that Aineias, through Poseidon's intelligence, can escape one version of his fate – the version in which he is slain by Achilles. On the other hand, and what is more likely in the context of the overall presentation of fate within the poem, is that Poseidon is merely playing a role the completion of Aineias' single fate, by warning him to stay clear of Achilles. This demonstrates the possibility for envisioning a system in which each individual's fate is interconnected with each other individual. This system of interconnectedness is evident elsewhere too, as we have seen; the prime example is the tied fates of Hektor and Achilles, but we have also seen the connection between the deaths of Patroklos and Hektor.

#### Hektor's Death, Achilles' Fate

At the heart of the *Iliad*, driving the narrative, are the intertwined fates of Hektor and Achilles, although the two warriors exhibit starkly different attitudes toward fate. Achilles is acutely aware what his fate holds, and approaches it armed with this foreknowledge, exhibiting an unwavering acceptance of the destiny which has been mapped out for him. Achilles knows that he will be μινυνθάδιος ('short-lived')<sup>30</sup> and Thetis tells Zeus that Achilles is doomed to ὠκυμωρώτατος ('die early');<sup>31</sup> Thetis tells him that he διχθαδίας κῆρας φερέμεν θανάτοιο ('carries two dooms of death');<sup>32</sup> and she makes it clear that αὐτίκα γάρ τοι ἔπειτα μεθ' Ἑκτορα πότμος ἐτοῖμος ('immediately after Hektor your own death is ready at hand').<sup>33</sup> Xanthus prophesies to Achilles that μόρσιμόν ἐστι θεῶ τε καὶ ἀνέρι ἱφὶ δαμῆναι ('fate apportions that a god and a man will forcibly overpower you');<sup>34</sup> and finally as

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<sup>30</sup> Hom. *Il.* 1.354 cf. 1.416

<sup>31</sup> Hom. *Il.* 1.505.

<sup>32</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.411.

<sup>33</sup> Hom. *Il.* 18.96.

<sup>34</sup> Hom. *Il.* 19.417.

he lay dying, Hektor warns Achilles: φράζεο νῦν, μή τοί τι θεῶν μήνιμα γένωμαι ἥματι τῷ ὅτε κέν σε Πάρις καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων ἐσθλὸν ἔοντ' ὀλέσωσιν ἐνὶ Σκαίῃσι πύλῃσιν ('Be careful now; for I might be made into the gods' curse upon you, on that day when Paris and Phoibos Apollo destroy in in the Skaian gates, for all your valour').<sup>35</sup> This feeling is not just confined to these two protagonists but is also found in other warriors. Hektor himself most clearly articulates this acceptance when he tells his wife Andromache:

οὐ γάρ τίς μ' ὑπὲρ αἴσαν ἀνὴρ Ἄϊδι προΐάψει:  
μοῖραν δ' οὐ τίνα φημι πεφυγμένον ἔμμεναι ἀνδρῶν,  
οὐ κακὸν οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλόν, ἐπὴν τὰ πρῶτα γένηται.

No man beyond what is fated shall send me to Hades; but his fate (αἴσα), say I, no man has ever escaped, whether he is base or noble, when once he has been born.<sup>36</sup>

The inevitability of fate and death does not dissuade Hektor from battle; like all the Greek and Trojan heroes he is resigned to the destiny of his own death. For them, it is an implicit part of life and battle and, as Hektor has commented, there is only one man or god or circumstance which can end each person's life, and there is no escape from that. Although his reference is to αἴσα, rather than μοῖρα, the sentiment is the same. Aisa is a divinity who, like the Moirai, dispenses man's lot in life. Early in the poem Hektor's brother, Helenos, urged him on to challenge the ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν, the best of the Achaians, because, he says: οὐ γάρ πώ τοι μοῖρα θανεῖν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν: ὥς γὰρ ἐγὼν ὅπ' ἄκουσα θεῶν αἰειγενετάων ('Not yet is it your fate to die and meet your doom; for thus I have heard the voice of the gods who are for ever').<sup>37</sup> When his time does come, though, it is fate which leads him to his death: Ἕκτορα δ' αὐτοῦ μέναι ὀλοὴ μοῖρ' ἐπέδησεν Ἰλίου προπάραιθε πυλάων τε Σκαϊάων ('But Hektor did deadly fate ensnare to remain there in front

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<sup>35</sup> Hom. *Il.* 22.358-360.

<sup>36</sup> Hom. *Il.* 6.487-489.

<sup>37</sup> Hom. *Il.* 7.52-53.

of Ilios and the Skaian gates').<sup>38</sup> In the face of his death, when he realises that he has been tricked by Achilles and Athena, and that Deiphobos was not by his side, he lamented that ἦ μάλα δὴ με θεοὶ θάνατόνδ' ἐκάλεσσαν ('truly have the gods called me to my death')<sup>39</sup> and then νῦν αὖτέ με μοῖρα κιχάνει ('by now again my fate has caught up with me').<sup>40</sup> In her grief at his death, Hektor's mother, Hekabe wails this same sentiment, saying: νῦν αὖ θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κιχάνει ('now death and fate have caught up with you').<sup>41</sup> Later, as her husband prepares to travel to the Achaian camp to ransom Hektor's body from Achilles, she laments the horrific outcome of her son's life: τῷ δ' ὥς ποθι Μοῖρα κραταιή γεινομένῳ ἐπένησε λίνῳ, ὅτε μιν τέκον αὐτή ('in this way for him did resistless Fate spin with her tread at his birth').<sup>42</sup>

When Thetis goes to warn her son that it is his fate to die at Troy, she states ἀλλὰ τοι ἤδη ἄγχι παρέστηκεν θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή ('but even now death stand hard by you and resistless fate').<sup>43</sup> Following Hektor's death, Patroklos' ghost presents a similar warning to Achilles when he says: καὶ δέ σοι αὐτῷ μοῖρα, θεοῖς ἐπιείκει' Ἀχιλλεῦ, τείχει ὕπο Τρώων εὐγενέων ἀπολέσθαι ('and for you yourself, godlike Achilles, it is fate to die beneath the wall of the wealthy Trojans').<sup>44</sup> However, it is not the warning to Achilles that tells us the most about personified Fate in Patroklos' speech, but a reproof of his own death: οὐ μὲν γὰρ ζωοὶ γε φίλων ἀπάνευθεν ἐταίρων βουλὰς ἐζόμενοι βουλευόμεν, ἀλλ' ἐμὲ μὲν κῆρ ἀμφέχανε στυγερή, ἣ περ λάχε γεινόμενόν περ ('never more in life will we sit apart from our dear comrades and take council together, but loathsome destiny has gaped around me, the ker that was appointed me even from my birth').<sup>45</sup> In this passage fate is κῆρ, not μοῖρα, and even if it is not presented as a personified proper-noun, but

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<sup>38</sup> Hom. *Il.* 22.5-6.

<sup>39</sup> Hom. *Il.* 22.297.

<sup>40</sup> Hom. *Il.* 22.303.

<sup>41</sup> Hom. *Il.* 22.436.

<sup>42</sup> Hom. *Il.* 24.209-210.

<sup>43</sup> Hom. *Il.* 24.131-132.

<sup>44</sup> Hom. *Il.* 23.80-81.

<sup>45</sup> Hom. *Il.* 23.77-79.

rather as an abstract-noun, there would still be a resonance of agency within the concept of destiny that Patroklos is referring to.

### The Monstrous Ker

What drives this agency is the use of the rare verb ἀμφέχανω, suggesting that ker is yawning around Patroklos; a kind of yawning or gaping open that endows this ker with a sense of personalisation even though she does not appear as a concretely imagined anthropomorphised divinity. This action suggests a physical presence; her personality, like that of Moira, occurs not in the nouns but in the verbs used to give these concepts agency and action.<sup>46</sup> Here the act of gaping indicates, as Vernant comments, 'that when Ker opens her mouth to swallow you, she sends you back to the original abyss'.<sup>47</sup> This action makes Ker transform from a simple agent of fate into a kind of monster; and she shares many attributes with other monsters as well, particularly in the act of gaping open. In Aischylos' *Choephoroi*, Orestes uses the same term, ἀμφέχανω, to describe the snake-child opening its mouth to suck at Klytaimnestra's breast, 'mixing mother's milk with clots of blood, for the *ker*'s nature is mixed with life and death',<sup>48</sup> as Vermeule says. Ker's monstrosity is reflected in the Homeric and Hesiodic descriptions of her physicality. In her only true personification in the *Iliad*, Ker appears during the description of the battle scene on Achilles' shield:

έν δ' Ἔρις έν δὲ Κυδοιμὸς ὁμίλειον, έν δ' ὀλοή Κήρ,  
ἄλλον ζωνὸν ἔχουσα νεούτατον, ἄλλον ἄουτον,  
ἄλλον τεθνηῶτα κατὰ μόθον ἔλκε ποδοῖν:  
εἶμα δ' ἔχ' ἀμφ' ὤμοισι δαφοινεὸν αἵματι φωτῶν.

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<sup>46</sup> Clarke 1999: 244. cf. Burkert 2005: 4; Stafford 2000: 10.

<sup>47</sup> Vernant 1991: 98. cf. Clarke 1999: 249. Clarke makes a direct link between the ker's gaping open and the monstrous: 'By ἀμφέχανε, 'yawned', 'gaped', he must mean that the Ker opened her mouth to seize him like some monstrous beast. Several times we hear that the Keres carry dying men away, κῆρες ἔβαν θανάτοιο (Il. 302; xiv. 207), just as on the Shield of Achilles they drag the corpse to and fro'.

<sup>48</sup> Vermeule 1979: 40.

And among them Strife and Tumult joined, and destructive Ker, grasping one man alive, fresh-wounded, another without a wound, and another she dragged dead though the melee by the feet; and the raiment that she had about her shoulders was red with the blood of men.<sup>49</sup>

This description is echoed on Hesiod's description of Herakles' shield:

έν δὲ Προΐωξίς τε Παλίωξίς τε τέτυκτο,  
έν δ' Ὅμαδός τε Φόνος τ' Ἀνδροκτασίη τε δεδήει,  
έν δ' Ἔρις, έν δὲ Κυδοιμός ἐθύνεον, έν δ' ὀλοή Κήρ  
ἄλλον ζών ἔχουσα νεούτατον, ἄλλον ἄουτον,  
ἄλλον τεθνηῶτα κατὰ μόθον ἔλκε ποδοῖν:  
εἶμα δ' ἔχ' ἀμφ' ὤμοισι δαφοινεὸν αἵματι φωτῶν,  
δεινὸν δερκομένη καναχῇσί τε βεβρυχυῖα.

Upon it were wrought Pursuit and Rally; upon it burned Tumult and Murder and Slaughter; upon it was Strife, upon it rushed Battle-Din, upon it deadly Ker was dragging men by the feet though the battle, holding one who was alive but freshly wounded, another who was unwounded, another who had died. Around her shoulders she wore a cloak, purple with the blood of men, and she glared terribly and bellowed with a clanging sound.<sup>50</sup>

Hesiod, however, goes further:

αἱ δὲ μετ' αὐτοὺς  
Κῆρες κυάνεαι, λευκοὺς ἀραβεῦσαι ὀδόντας,  
δεινωποὶ βλοσυροὶ τε δαφοινοὶ τ' ἄπλητοὶ τε  
δῆριν ἔχον περὶ πιπτόντων: πᾶσαι δ' ἄρ' ἔεντο  
αἶμα μέλαν πῖεειν: ὃν δὲ πρῶτον μεμάποιεν  
κείμενον ἢ πίπτοντα νεούτατον, ἀμφὶ μὲν αὐτῷ  
βάλλον ὁμῶς ὄνυχας μεγάλους, ψυχὴ δὲ Ἄιδόσδε κατῆεν  
Τάρταρον ἐς κρυόενθ': αἱ δὲ φρένας εὖτ' ἀρέσαντο  
αἵματος ἀνδρομέου, τὸν μὲν ρίπτασκον ὀπίσσω,  
ἄψ δ' ὄμαδον καὶ μῶλον ἐθύνεον αὖτις ἰοῦσαι.

Behind them, the dark Keres, gnashing their white teeth, terrible-faced, grim, blood-red, dreadful, were engaged in conflict around those who were falling. They were all eager to drink black blood.

<sup>49</sup> Hom. *Il.* 18.535-538.

<sup>50</sup> Hes. *Sh.* 154-160. trans. Most.

Whomever they caught first, lying there or falling freshly wounded, she clenched around him her great claws, and his soul went down to Hades to chilling Tartarus. When they had satisfied their spirits with human blood, they would hurl him backwards, and going forward they would rush once again into the battle din and melee.<sup>51</sup>

The Keres here both appear monstrous and act monstrously. In both action and physicality they embody, and become, the violent destruction of death: a type of destruction where life is ripped out or stolen away rather than given over. However, the external physicality of the Ker only serves to enhance her monstrous actions; her 'great claws' or 'gnashing white teeth' or 'grim, blood-red, dreadful, terrible face' are not enough to warrant a monstrous status in and of themselves. There are numerous examples of creatures with claws or large frightening teeth or terrible ugliness in nature that are not monsters. What makes the Ker stand apart from these is that she does not seem to pick her subjects carefully, rather she indiscriminately takes all men from the battlefield, at any stage of death from freshly wounded to almost putrefying, eagerly drinking away their life and then flings them aside ready to move on to the next victim. It is her lack of empathy for human life that makes the Ker so monstrous, and what sets Ker-as-fate apart from Moira-as-fate. The Ker leaves the body distorted and broken in death, and as the treatment of the body after death is highly important to the Greeks and any kind of action that compromises the body's integrity is considered to be terrible.<sup>52</sup> By sucking the blood out of her victims, casting them aside or tossing them to and fro the Ker is taking away any chance for the families of her victims to complete the proper, required rituals of burial. Proper burial is a key aspect of funerary rites and a body that has been violently torn apart by a Ker would prove significantly more difficult to honour appropriately than one that has been taken more gently. In the *Iliad* we see proper burial and celebration being carried out, for τὸ γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ

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<sup>51</sup> Hes. *Sh.* 248-257. trans. Most.

<sup>52</sup> For further discussion on the treatment of the body after death, see appendix one.



θανόντων ('such is the privilege of the dead'),<sup>53</sup> as is made clear in regards to Sarpedon's death; the gods, too, preserve Hektor's body despite Achilles attempts to destroy it,<sup>54</sup> showing how seriously they, and therefore men, take the integrity of the body at burial. But when the Ker takes ownership of the deceased a perversion of the body takes place, the man is turned into a corpse, which is turned into rotting and putrefying flesh before any chance for burial.

With this in mind we may draw some parallels between Ker and another Homeric monster, the Skylla. Much like Ker's physical representation in Hesiod, the *Odyssey's* cave-dwelling Skylla is physically monstrous:

ἔνθα δ' ἐνὶ Σκύλλῃ ναίει δεινὸν λελακυῖα.  
 τῆς ἥτοι φωνὴ μὲν ὄση σκύλακος νεογιλλῆς  
 γίνεται, αὐτὴ δ' αὖτε πέλωρ κακόν: οὐδέ κέ τις μιν  
 γηθήσειεν ἰδών, οὐδ' εἰ θεὸς ἀντιάσειε.  
 τῆς ἥτοι πόδες εἰσὶ δυνώδεκα πάντες ἄωροι,  
 ἔξ δέ τέ οἱ δειραὶ περιμήκεες, ἐν δὲ ἐκάστη  
 σμερδαλή κεφαλὴ, ἐν δὲ τρίστοιχοι ὀδόντες  
 πυκνοὶ καὶ θαμέες, πλείοι μέλανος θανάτοιο.  
 μέσση μὲν τε κατὰ σπείους κοίλοιο δέδυκεν,  
 ἔξω δ' ἔξ ἴσχει κεφαλὰς δεινοῖο βερέθρου,  
 αὐτοῦ δ' ἰχθυάα, σκόπελον περιμαιμώσα,  
 δελφῖνάς τε κύνας τε, καὶ εἴ ποθι μείζον ἔλῃσι  
 κῆτος, ἃ μυρία βόσκει ἀγάστονος Ἀμφιτρίτη.

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<sup>53</sup> Hom. *Il.* 16.457.

<sup>54</sup> τὸν δ' οὐ κύνες ἀμφεπένοντο,  
 ἀλλὰ κύνας μὲν ἄλαλκε Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη  
 ἥματα καὶ νύκτας, ῥοδόεντι δὲ χρίεν ἐλαίῳ  
 ἀμβροσίῳ, ἵνα μὴ μιν ἀποδρύφοι ἐλκυστάζων.  
 τῷ δ' ἐπὶ κυάνεον νέφος ἤγαγε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων  
 οὐρανόθεν πεδίονδε, κάλυψε δὲ χῶρον ἅπαντα  
 ὅσσον ἐπεῖχε νέκυς, μὴ πρὶν μένος ἡελίοιο  
 σκήλει' ἀμφὶ περὶ χροά ἵνεσιν ἡδὲ μέλεσσιν.

But no dogs were busy with Hektor, but the daughter of Zeus, Aphrodite, kept dogs from him by day and by night alike, and with oil she anointed him, rose-sweet, ambrosial, so that Achilles might not tear him as he dragged him. And over him Phoibos Apollon drew a dark cloud from heaven to the plain, and covered the entire place on which the dead man lay, lest before time the might of the sun should shrivel his flesh around his sinews and limbs. (Hom. *Il.* 23.184-191.)

In [the cave] dwells Skylla, yelping terribly. Her voice to be sure is only as loud as the voice of a new born whelp, but she herself is an evil monster, nor would anyone be glad at the sight of her, not even though it should be a god that met her. She has, you must know, twelve legs, all flexible, and six necks, exceedingly long, and on each one a frightful head, and in it three rows of teeth, thick and close, full of black death. Up to her middle she is hidden in the hollow cave, but she holds her head out beyond the dread chasm, and fishes there, eagerly searching around the rock for dolphins and sea dogs and whatever greater beast she may happen to catch, such creatures as deep-moaning Amphitrite rears in multitudes past counting.<sup>55</sup>

The cave which Skylla's body is sunken into leads, we are told, to Erebos.<sup>56</sup> It is a passage which leads between the upper world and the netherworld, a passage between life and death which leads to the same shady abyss that man will find on the other side of Ker's gaping mouth. Skylla, like Ker, inhabits the mortal world which is controlled by the ouranic gods but she serves a primordial and chaotic function. As Skylla's cave leads to misty Erebos, violent and destructive Ker represents, as Vernant concludes, 'death proper, that domain beyond-the-threshold, the gaping aperture of the other side that no gaze can penetrate and no discourse can express: they are nothing but the horror of unspeakable Night'.<sup>57</sup> As a herald of destructive, violent death, Ker drags men across boundaries; not only the boundary between life and death but that between the glory that awaits the heroic warrior in life and the obscurity and anonymity of death; a state which directly contravenes the heroes desires for himself in death.

#### Moirai and Ker in Homer

Moirai are also synonymous with death, and the fate of death. Dietrich comments that 'Moirai = death is common to all men; Moirai destroys man, snuffs him out as a light'.<sup>58</sup> One of the main distinctions that we can make between Moirai and Ker is

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<sup>55</sup> Hom. *Od.* 12.85-97.

<sup>56</sup> Hom. *Od.* 12.81.

<sup>57</sup> Vernant 1991: 97.

<sup>58</sup> B. C. Dietrich 1965: 75.

their non-personified use throughout the corpus of extant literature. There are, for example, many occurrences of μοῖρα in the *Iliad* in the context of lot or share; the term is not reserved solely for discussion or comments about life and death. However, when used with a clear meaning of ‘fate’ the overwhelming majority of cases occur in the construction, or similar to the construction, θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα – death and fate, intertwined. Of the forty-seven occurrences in the *Iliad*, Moira is connected with death on thirty occasions. Although instances of Moira as a direct personification are rare (as with Ker), she becomes physically present in the non-mythical uses as well, with the use of agency-giving verbs with which she is associated.

The *Odyssey*, unsurprisingly, also contains both mythic and non-mythic uses of Moira, though the latter with less frequency than the *Iliad*. Two of the five mythic occurrences of Moira occur during Odysseus’ tale of his trip into the Underworld, the third in relation to the fate of Aigisthos and another to Iphitos’ death. The final instance occurs during Penelope’s prayer to Artemis, in which she relates a story about the Harpyiai snatching away a group of maidens and delivering them to the Erinyes as servants.<sup>59</sup> In the story, m/Moira is connected with Zeus, as a kind of councillor, an image which appears much more strongly in Hesiod’s ouranic origin story of the Moirai:

ὥς δ’ ὅτε Πανδαρέου κούρας ἀνέλοντο θύελλαι:  
 τῆσι τοκῆας μὲν φθίσαν θεοί, αἱ δ’ ἐλίποντο  
 ὀρφαναὶ ἐν μεγάροισι, κόμισσε δὲ δι’ Ἀφροδίτη  
 τυρῶ καὶ μέλιτι γλυκερῶ καὶ ἡδέϊ οἴνω:  
 Ἥρη δ’ αὐτῇσιν περὶ πασέων δῶκε γυναικῶν  
 εἶδος καὶ πινυτήν, μῆκος δ’ ἔπορ’ Ἄρτεμις ἀγνή,  
 ἔργα δ’ Ἀθηναίη δέδαε κλυτὰ ἐργάζεσθαι.  
 εὖτ’ Ἀφροδίτη διὰ προσέστιχε μακρὸν Ὀλυμπον,  
 κούρης αἰτήσουσα τέλος θαλεροῖο γάμοιο  
 ἐς Δία τερπικέραυνον, ὃ γάρ τ’ εὖ οἶδεν ἅπαντα,  
 μοῖράν τ’ ἄμμορίην τε καταθνητῶν ἀνθρώπων  
 τόφρα δὲ τὰς κούρας ἄρπυιαι ἀνηρείψαντο

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<sup>59</sup> As discussed in chapter five.

καί ῥ' ἔδοσαν στυγερῇσιν ἐρινύσιν ἀμφιπολεύειν:

...as once storm winds bore away the daughters of Pandareus. Their parents the god had slain, and they were left orphans in the halls, and fair Aphrodite tended them with cheese, and sweet honey, and pleasant wine, and Hera gave them beauty and wisdom above all women, and chaste Artemis gave them stature, and Athena taught them skill in glorious handiwork. But while beautiful Aphrodite was going to high Olympos to ask for the maidens the accomplishment of joyful marriage – going to Zeus who hurls the thunderbolt, for well he knows all things, both happiness and the haplessness of mortal men – meanwhile the Harpyiai snatched away the maidens and gave them to the hateful Erinyes to be their handmaids.<sup>60</sup>

Penelope's story is a digression of her prayer to Artemis expressing her wish for the goddess to kill her suddenly with an arrow, or else to be snatched away by the Harpyiai, a fate that is echoed by that of the Pandareids in her story. The girls are *aoroi*, having died at a young age and before marriage, and as such fall into a category of 'special' dead<sup>61</sup> (for, being now in Hades, they are in fact dead). *Aoroi* are included in the types of dead who inhabit the periphery of the Underworld, not belonging in it completely, as they cannot be fully separated from the world of the living. Young, unmarried maidens like the Pandareids are in the first group to swarm to Odysseus' blood-pit in the Odyssey's *Nekyia*;<sup>62</sup> closer to the trench because they are in the liminal space between the two worlds.<sup>63</sup> There can be a connotation that the individuals who inhabit this transgressive space were not only figuratively killed 'before their time' but had actually died before their allotted time was up. Because of this they can neither inhabit the living world, as they have already withdrawn from it, nor the Underworld, from which they are excluded until the appointed time of their arrival.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Hom. *Od.* 20.66-78.

<sup>61</sup> cf. Garland 1985: 77-103.

<sup>62</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.34-41.

<sup>63</sup> See also Bremmer 1983: 103. Johnston 1994: 139; Lattimore 1942: 186-87.

<sup>64</sup> See also Johnston 1994: 139.

Homer, as we have seen, presents a picture in which a mythical, but not necessarily personified or deified, *Moira*-as-fate exists alongside a non-mythical, everyday *moira*-as-portion; although they are never entirely separated and mythic-*Moira* still retains the meaning of 'portion' in connection to man's allocated share of life. *Moira* does not necessarily need to be a personification or a deified being because *moira*-as-lot is a fact of man's life and death and, as Burkert comments, 'proclaims that the world is apportioned, that boundaries are drawn in space and time. For man, the most important and painful boundary is death: this is his limited portion'.<sup>65</sup> Contra to this is *Ker*, who is also presented both in personified and abstracted versions, but does not have a non-fate or non-death related meaning. As a power, fate – that is, both *Moira* and *Ker* (and *Aisa*) – at times appear to be beyond the control of even the gods. Achilles mentions that even Herakles had to succumb to fate, even though he was a favourite of Zeus<sup>66</sup> and Athena explicitly tells Telemachos: ἀλλ' ἤτοι θάνατον μὲν ὁμοίον οὐδὲ θεοὶ περ καὶ φίλῳ ἀνδρὶ δύνανται ἀλαλκέμεν, ὅππότε κεν δὴ μοῖρ' ὅλοη καθέλῃσι τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο ('but yet, not even gods can ward off death, common to all, even from a dear man when baneful fate, of death that brings long woe, takes him down').<sup>67</sup> As we have seen in the *kerostasia* of Hektor and Achilles' fates, Zeus does not control the outcome of the weighing, but he must nevertheless obey it. At other times it seems as though the gods do control fate and have a hand in its delivery. The Trojan and Achaian *kerostasia* is an example of Zeus' direct control over fate. Achilles' tale to Priam about Zeus' *pithoi* from which he dispenses good and evil to men provides another example:

δοιοὶ γάρ τε πίθοι κατακείται ἐν Διὸς οὔδει  
 δώρων οἷα δίδωσι κακῶν, ἕτερος δὲ ἔρων:  
 ὦ μὲν κ' ἀμμίξας δώη Ζεὺς τερπικέραυνος,  
 ἄλλοτε μὲν τε κακῶ ὃ γε κύρεται, ἄλλοτε δ' ἐσθλῶ:

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<sup>65</sup> Burkert 1985: 129-30.

<sup>66</sup> Hom. *Il.* 18.116-121.

<sup>67</sup> Hom. *Od.* 3.236-238.

ὣ δέ κε τῶν λυγρῶν δῶη, λωβητὸν ἔθηκε,  
καὶ ἔ κακὴ βούβρωστις ἐπὶ χθόνα διὰν ἐλαύνει,  
φοιτᾷ δ' οὔτε θεοῖσι τετιμένος οὔτε βροτοῖσιν.

For two urns are set on Zeus' floor of gifts that he gives, the one of ills, the other of blessings. To whomever Zeus, who hurls the thunderbolt, gives a mixed lot, that man meets now with evil, now with good; but to whomever he gives only the baneful, him he makes to be degraded by man, and evil madness drives him over the face of the sacred earth, and he wanders honour neither by gods nor mortals.<sup>68</sup>

Because of these apparent inconstancies it is impossible to forge a completely logical and systemised theology, and reconciliation between conflicting ideas cannot always occur. Indeed, Versnel argues, 'no archaic author displays a coherent and consistent monolithic worldview in his way of coping with the stupendous and enigmatic events in human life',<sup>69</sup> and death is possibly the greatest of these events. In terms of the literary context of fate, specifically *moira*, this fits with the specific occurrences in the poem; narrative action dictates how *moira* is treated: there is no need for consistency. When the nature of the poem necessitates that typically-neutral Moira become death-related in function, the connection is made between Moira and Thanatos, and the association of Moira and Ker, as the more inherently 'evil' embodiment of fate, reinforces negative aspects inherent in some individual attitudes towards death.

#### Moira and Ker in Hesiod

Contrary to Homer, Hesiod presents wholly personified and divine Moirai and Keres, although this is made inevitable by the nature of his work. Hesiod also uses a non-personified *moira* to mean 'lot' or 'share', but the sketching of a more concrete theological system goes further to develop the Moirai and Keres into active, personified figures, who are presented in association with one another. In the

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<sup>68</sup> Hom. *Il.* 24.527-533.

<sup>69</sup> Versnel 2011: 159.

*Theogony*, Hesiod writes two opposing origin stories for the Moirai; a Titanic version in which they are presented in conjunction with the Keres, and an ouranic version in which they appear subservient to the omnipotent Zeus. The Titanic version presents the three Moirai, and names them Klotho, Lachesis and Atropos, daughters of Night:

Νύξ δ' ἔτεκε στυγερὸν τε Μόρον καὶ Κῆρα μέλαιναν  
καὶ Θάνατον, τέκε δ' Ὕπνον, ἔτικτε δὲ φύλον Ὀνείρων.

...

καὶ Μοίρας καὶ Κῆρας ἐγείνατο νηλεοποίνους,  
Κλωθὴ τε Λάχেসίς τε καὶ Ἄτροπον, αἳ τε βροτοῖσι  
γεινομένοισι διδοῦσιν ἔχειν ἀγαθὸν τε κακὸν τε,  
αἳ τ' ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε παραιβασίας ἐφέπουσιν,  
οὐδέ ποτε λήγουσι θεαὶ δεινοῖο χόλοιο,  
πρίν γ' ἀπὸ τῷ δώωσι κακὴν ὄπιν, ὅστις ἀμάρτη.

Night bore loathsome Moros and black Ker and Thanatos, and she bore Hypnos, and she gave birth to the tribe of Dreams... And she bore Moirai and pitilessly punishing Keres, Klotho and Lachesis and Atropos, who give to mortals when they are born both good and evil to have, and who hold fast to the transgressions of both men and gods; and the goddesses never cease from their terrible wrath until they give evil punishment to whoever commits a crime.<sup>70</sup>

As Titans, they are here directly connected with death and the 'chthonic' Underworld, and their function is to portion out good and evil destinies to men at their birth. Along with the Keres, they are also charged with enacting punishments on men and gods alike. The two groups of goddesses provide both sides of the transaction; the Moirai advance men's fortune and, together with the Keres, they follow-up on man's fated evil-doing by punishing his malicious deeds. The Titanic Moirai and the Keres are intertwined; Hesiod names the Moirai, then the Keres, then describes the function of the Moirai, and then that of the Keres. They are not one and the same but their positions and functions are overlapping and intertwined – fate, punishment, and death are the domain of both collectives. In the Titanic origin

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<sup>70</sup> Hes. *Th.* 211-212, 217-222. trans. Most (with amendments).

story, the Moirai are also connected with Moros and with a singular Ker. Moros, from the same root as Moira, is a kind of 'fated-doom' or death. Although Moros does not frequently appear in a personified form, as we find here in Hesiod, μόρος as death does regularly appear in both Homer and Hesiod, always meaning something akin to 'destiny of death'.<sup>71</sup> The single Ker symbolises the unshakable connection to the Underworld and death that is the provenance of this connected group of divinities. The later Keres, joined with the Moirai, still have a death-related function but it is not as explicitly elucidated as the single Ker, who is mentioned first. This active, death-related 'Doom' of Ker is a characterisation that is familiar from her other appearances, although few in extant works, in other early poetry. In Homer, the Keres are only concretely depicted on the description of Achilles' shield, but in many other mentions the Keres appear as personified mythic beings. Mimnermus, in a *kerostasiaesque* soliloquy states, for example:

Κῆρες δὲ παρεστήκασι μέλαιναι,  
 ἢ μὲν ἔχουσα τέλος γήραος ἀργαλέου,  
 ἢ δ' ἑτέρη θανάοιο

But the dark Keres stand beside us, one holding grievous old age as  
 the outcome, the other death.<sup>72</sup>

While Theognis prays to Artemis to ward off the evil Keres: Ἄρτεμι θηροφόνῃ, θύγατερ Διός... εὐχομένῳ μοι κλῦθι, κακὰς δ' ἀπὸ κῆρας ἄλλαλκε ('Artemis, slayer of wild beasts, daughter of Zeus... give ear to my prayer and ward off the evil Keres').<sup>73</sup>

In the *Theogony's* ouranic origin story the Moirai become the subordinated daughters of Zeus and Themis. The Moirai have no direct power over the destiny of men or gods and the Keres are not mentioned:

<sup>71</sup> Hom. *Il.* 6.357, 18.465, 19.421, 20.30, 21.133, 21.517, 22.280, 24.85; *Od.* 1.34, 1.35, 1.166, 5.436, 9.61, 11.409, 11.618, 16.421, 20.241; h.Hom. *Dion.* 8, 51. For further discussion on non-mythic moros see Duffy 1947: 481-82.

<sup>72</sup> Mimn. *fr.* 2 (Gerber) = Stob. 4.34.12. trans. Gerber.

<sup>73</sup> Theog. *Eleg.* 1.11-13. trans. Gerber.



Μοίρας θ', ἧς πλείστην τιμὴν πόρε μητίετα Ζεὺς,  
Κλωθὴ τε Λάχεσιν τε καὶ Ἄτροπον, αἵ τε διδοῦσι  
θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποισιν ἔχειν ἀγαθὸν τε κακὸν τε.

And the Moirai, upon whom the counsellor Zeus bestowed the greatest honour, Klotho and Lachesis and Atropos, who give to mortal human beings both good and evil to have.<sup>74</sup>

In one sense they have been downgraded in importance between the two origins: as Titans they had a raw, unbridled power over men and gods, but as ouranic subservients they have a tightly controlled power that is only operable within the dominant theological system. The same kind of division is presented in Homer where, as we have seen, there are instances in which the influence of the Moirai operates over men and gods alike, but similarly there are instances in which Zeus himself appears to be main controller of fate. Unlike the Titanic Moirai, Hesiod's ouranic Moirai have no connection to death, beyond the simple fact that once a man's fate is completed he dies. Rather the emphasis is on apportioning good and evil to men, which is reminiscent of the story Achilles tells to Priam about Zeus' *pithoi*; handing out some good, some bad and some mixed fortunes, but seemingly indiscriminately. Unlike in the earlier description, in which they had their own personal power and a close relationship to the Keres, the ouranic Moirai take no role in the punishment of bad deeds. It is not a function that they require: once Zeus has apportioned fate, whether good or bad, there was no need for punishment. In the second half of the *Theogony*, the cosmology that is presented is aimed at establishing Zeus' pre-eminence over the previous generations of gods, and the listing of Zeus' offspring are set as a counter to the previous, Titanic, primordial powers represented in the children of Eris and Nyx. So, as Clay comments, 'the pleasant daughters of Themis, the Horai, Eunomia (Good Order), Justice, and Peace, form counterweights to Dysnomia (Disorder), Strife, and

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<sup>74</sup> Hes. *Th.* 904-906. trans. Most (with amendments).

Battles'.<sup>75</sup> When we consider the dichotomy created by these two sets of divinities, the reasoning behind the Moirai's second birth story becomes clearer. Their previous position as 'chthonic' Underworld divinities with a direct relationship to death and who have the ultimate power over forging the destinies of men and gods is transformed into a controlled and subordinated response to the ouranic king of the gods. Therefore, by taming the Moirai, Zeus can demonstrate his control of their power as a gesture which reinforces his reign over the older, Titanic gods.

Hesiod's Moira exhibits her close association with death in a fragment dealing with Peirithous' descent into Hades:

..... ὅλ]έσαι με βίηφι τε δουρί μακρῶι,  
 ἀλλὰ με Μοῖρ' ὅλο]ῃ καὶ Λητοῦς ὤλεσε]ν υἱός.  
 ἀλλ' ἄγε δὴ μοι ταῦτα δι]αμπερέως ἀγό[ρεασον  
 .....]νδε κατήλυες [εἰς Ἀΐδαο

]to destroy me by force and a long spear  
 But deadly Fate] and Leto's son destroyed [me.  
 But now come and] tell [me this] through and through  
 ] you have descended [into Hades<sup>76</sup>

The second line of Most's reconstruction, based on *Iliad* 16.849,<sup>77</sup> reinforces Moira as a death-agent, describing her as ὅλοιος, an epic construction of ὄλοος: deadly, destructive or fatal, even murderous. The almost total reconstruction of this phrase is not itself unprecedented, occurring eight times in the Homeric corpus.<sup>78</sup> Hesiod's second, ouranic, origin story is not incompatible with this appearance. The lot of man and god alike come from Zeus and the Moirai are merely assistants of his. The earlier, Titanic, story makes the Moirai masters of fate and not only were they not subordinated to any of the ouranic gods they did not need their assistance. Moirai

<sup>75</sup> Clay 2003: 29. cf. Gould 1985: 25-26.

<sup>76</sup> Hes. *fr.* 216.1-4 (Most). trans. Most.

<sup>77</sup> ἀλλὰ με μοῖρ' ὄλοῃ καὶ Λητοῦς ἔκτανεν υἱός

No, deadly destiny, with the son of Leto, has killed me.

<sup>78</sup> Hom. *Il.* 16.849, 21.83; *Od.* 2.100, 3.238, 19.145, 24.29, 24.135.

taking assistance from Apollo is not incongruous with that previous image, but neither does it fit with the strong, independent figure that Hesiod initially presented. What we may conclude is that not only in the extant corpus of one author but, as is the case with Hesiod within a single work, the image that is presented of the Moirai is at once Titanic and then ouranic and that the presentation fits with context and is flexible.

### Personification?

We must, as always, be vigilant not to ascribe a complete personification where there is no evidence that one exists; this is particularly important in cases such as Moira and Ker where there are – overwhelmingly – more instances of their names being used as abstract nouns rather than personifications. Different treatments of these divinities (or abstract concepts) are evident though the different authors who introduce them. In the *Theogony*, Hesiod is describing personified divinities, whereas in the *Katabasis* he has Peirithous describing his own conceptualisation of his specific fate. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* reflect both ends of this spectrum, with the poet-narrator himself describing, at times, a materialised Fate and, at other times, characters reflecting of their own fates and their own ideas about fate. Clarke points out two things which we must particularly remember: the names of agents alternate freely in the epics, without distinction, and sometimes from line to line and this includes abstract nouns which are never given any kind of anthropomorphised distinction – πότης for μοῖρα, for example.<sup>79</sup> Secondly, there are times when the uses of Moira and Ker are incompatible with their characterisations as ‘Deaths’ or death agents. He says, by way of example, that ‘Death must be something abstract or intangible when a man scheming against another is said to plant or establish his death. Likewise when one brings about another’s death it has been made or wrought... and a killer can boast to his victim that he will “forge” or “fashion” the ker

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<sup>79</sup> Clarke 1999: 253-54.

of his death'.<sup>80</sup> What these instances show is not a *Ker* that is, as Clarke finds, incompatible with the personified doom of death that we have seen but one that extends and casts a hand over the actions of men. After all, in another form *Ker* is simply the fate which is assigned to man at the beginning of his life. We must, of course, heed Clarke's advice and not ascribe a wholesale personification to *Moirai* or *Ker*, but similarly we must remember that the non-mythic uses, enhanced by verbs that push agency upon abstracted versions of *ker* and *moira*, still renders a sense of personality, if not total personification, upon these death-agents. Herodotos asserts that the Greeks were taught about their gods by Homer and Hesiod,<sup>81</sup> and there has been a more traditional view that Hesiod represented a more complex permutation of the Hellenic theology.<sup>82</sup> What we actually find when we examine both Homer and Hesiod's theological positions is that neither is congruent, even within itself. This may be because, particularly within the works of Homer, there is a visible stratification of changing beliefs evident within the works. As Sourvinou-Inwood says, 'the earlier attitudes... survived during the archaic period in some circles, while in other they were modified, and lived on in this modified form'.<sup>83</sup>

### Fate in Other Literature

The confusion regarding *Moirai* as a personified or abstract noun continues in Pindar's lyric poems, although a new dimension is added to the eschatological significance behind *Moirai*. Pindar's second Olympic Ode, composed for Theron of Akragas' victory in the chariot race of 476, recounts the first extant Greek passage mentioning observance of justice in life being necessary for reward after death.<sup>84</sup> Although, Nisetich comments, 'the thoughts expressed in the poem seem at

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<sup>80</sup> Clarke 1999: 254.

<sup>81</sup> Hdt. 2.53.2. See also Introduction for further discussion of this passage.

<sup>82</sup> Gould 1985: 25-26.

<sup>83</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 300.

<sup>84</sup> Nisetich 1989: 28.

variance with the concept of the nature and destiny of the soul as it appears elsewhere in Pindar',<sup>85</sup> and as such it has been suggested that *Olympian 2* may have been composed under the influence of a belief system at odds with Pindar's own. What makes Pindar's exposition on life after death in the ode striking is that it contradicts other contemporary explanations; most notably the vision of the dead and death presented in Homer, and specifically relating to Achilles' transference to the Isle of the Blessed.<sup>86</sup> Where in Homer we find all men, rather indiscriminately, end up in dank Hades, besides a very special few who are transferred to the Isle of the Blessed either because they are the children of or favourites of the gods. In Pindar what we find is that judgement for acts undertaken during life – or lives – are either punished or rewarded,<sup>87</sup> he espouses limited reincarnation<sup>88</sup> where, after a three well-lived and just lives, one is transferred to the Isle of the Blessed.<sup>89</sup> This expression of punishment and reward in death for deeds committed in life is partly responsible for the belief that Pindar's odes – or at least some of the odes, including *Olympian 2* – are a reflection of some form of Mystery cult-related belief.<sup>90</sup> This is particularly prevalent is discussion of the so-called 'Orphic' gold tablets, and the connections one can find between the tablets and Pindar's odes.<sup>91</sup>

Pindar's reluctance to create an overarching vision of life after death that is generally applicable to all is clear. For, he says, ἦτοι βροτῶν γε κέκριται πείραξ οὐ τι θανάτου ('truly, in the case of mortal's death's end is not at all determined').<sup>92</sup> This suggests that men *can* influence their own death if they live just and noble lives. Earlier in the ode, however, Pindar twice refers to the inescapability of fate; in the

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<sup>85</sup> Nisetich 1989: 28.

<sup>86</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 2.79.

<sup>87</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 2.57-67. There are, in Homer, a small number of individuals who are punished in death for acts committed during their lives. These are, without exception, extreme cases in which the individual in question has sinned against the gods. There is no consideration for acts which are considered to be man 'sinning' against fellow man.

<sup>88</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 2.68-69.

<sup>89</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 71-72. cf. Lloyd-Jones 1985: 246.

<sup>90</sup> Nisetich 1988: 2. And see above, in the discussion of Persephone in Pindar.

<sup>91</sup> See also the discussion in chapter four.

<sup>92</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 2.30-31.

first instance he indicates that previous misfortune could be overturned by fated good:

λάθα δὲ πότμῳ σὺν εὐδαίμονι γένοιτ' ἄν.  
ἐσλῶν γὰρ ὑπὸ χαρμάτων πῆμα θνάσκει  
παλίγκοτον δαμασθέν,  
ὅταν θεοῦ Μοῖρα πέμπῃ  
ἀνεκὰς ὄλβον ὑψηλόν.

But with a fortunate destiny forgetfulness may result,  
for under the force of noble joys the pain dies  
and its malignancy is suppressed,  
whenever divine Moira sends  
happiness towering upwards.<sup>93</sup>

This is followed, shortly after, by a strong assertion that Moira dictates the destiny of the family of Oidipous:

οὕτω δὲ Μοῖρ' , ἧ τε πατρώιον  
τῶνδ' ἔχει τὸν εὖφρονα πότμον

Thus it is Moira, who controls the kindly destiny  
that is the patrimony of this family<sup>94</sup>

An easy explanation for this apparent incongruity lays in the structure of the ode: the claim that man can, with good behaviour, escape fate comes within an eschatological exposition, while the two following claims related to two different mythological episodes being recounted in the ode.

The ability to control one's own destiny in death is at odds with a conceptualisation of fate and destiny, and particularly with a personified, deified 'Fate'. Pindar expresses the concept of man's allotment, or fate, in a number of ways but most usually uses the terms μοῖρα and πότμος. Like Homer, Pindar also uses the term *moira* with the traditional meaning of 'share' or 'lot', although when used to mean man's allotment of life his emphasis is on the inevitability and

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<sup>93</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 2.18-21. trans. Race.

<sup>94</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 2.35-36. trans. Race.

inflexibility of death. Fate is, even in *Olympian 2*, an active and divine force that steers human destiny. In Pindar more generally, divine fate occurs both as singular, Μοῖρα, and plural, Μοῖραι,<sup>95</sup> as well as two of the three Moirai being referred to by name, Κλωθώ,<sup>96</sup> and Λάχεσις.<sup>97</sup> In *Nemean 7*, Pindar presents a very overt explanation of the role of Moira:

φυῶ δ' ἕκαστος διαφέρομεν βιοτὰν λαχόντες,  
ὁ μὲν τά, τὰ δ' ἄλλοι: τυχεῖν δ' ἔν' ἀδύνατον  
εὐδαιμονίαν ἅπασαν ἀνελόμενον: οὐκ ἔχω  
εἰπεῖν, τίνι τοῦτο Μοῖρα τέλος ἔμπεδον  
ᾧρεξε.

By nature each of us is allotted a life that sets him apart:  
one person has this, others that, and it is impossible  
for one man to succeed in winning complete happiness:  
I cannot name any to whom Moira has given such a prize  
that lasts.<sup>98</sup>

Pindar's Moira is also embroiled in the conflict between fate as a power above the gods, and fate as a power controlled by the gods. In *Paeon 6* we find:

νέφεσσι δ' ἐν χρυσέοις Ὀλύμποι-  
ο καὶ κορυφαῖσιν ἵζων  
μόρσιμ' ἀνα[λ]ύεν Ζεὺς ὁ θεῶν σκοπὸς οὐ τόλ-  
μα

But Zeus, the watcher of the gods, sitting on the peaks  
among the golden clouds of Olympos,  
Did not dare to undo the things that were fated.<sup>99</sup>

Although the Moirai are not here as personified divinities, Pindar's sentiment is the same: Zeus cannot undo fate; or at least, 'does not dare' to do so.

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<sup>95</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 6.42, 10.52; *Pyth.* 4.145; *Nem.* 7.1; *Isth.* 6.18; *fr.* (Race) 30.3.

<sup>96</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 1.26; *Isth.* 6.17.

<sup>97</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 6.64; *Pae.* 12.17.

<sup>98</sup> Pind. *Nem.* 7.54-58. trans. Race.

<sup>99</sup> Pind. *Pae.* 6.93-95. trans. Race.

In Pindar, we find that Moira overlaps with another, personified and abstracted, noun which has a connection to destiny, that of Tyche: good fortune, favour of the gods, or luck. This is a more difficult connection to reconcile than that between fate and death; if man's life is fated then there can be no pure luck. The favour of the gods cannot stave off the completion of fate; we saw that in Homer with Achilles' comments regarding Herakles. Pausanias comments that Pindar not only made Tyche into one of the Moirai, but then made her more powerful than her 'sisters',<sup>100</sup> which shows that it is possible that personified Luck, or god's (or gods') will, could override fate. This opposes Zeus' unwillingness to change what has been fated, but the original statement is ambiguous in its intention. Pindar does not make it explicitly clear Zeus *cannot* change fate, only that he 'does not dare' to do so.

This same ambiguity appears in Homer's statements about Zeus' inability or unwillingness to change the natural condition of fate. At any rate, Tyche's power – or Zeus' power in the case that he could, in fact, dictate fate – would only act so far as to delay in inevitable end of man's life. Archilochus makes this connection, stating that *πάντα Τύχη καὶ Μοῖρα... ἀνδρὶ δίδωσιν* ('Tyche and Moira give a man everything'),<sup>101</sup> but he elsewhere makes similar statements of the gods,<sup>102</sup> indicating the gods' power over men. He does not treat either Moira or Tyche as divinities, but they are rather poetic characterisations; not elements which belong to, or are controlled by, a sphere of influence but, as Berry says, they are 'neutral elements in man's destiny and in happening; not θεοί but θεῖον in their power over mankind'.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Paus. 7.26.8; Pind. *fr.* 41 (Schroeder). cf. Berry 1940: 16; Roscher 1916-1924: col. 3101.

<sup>101</sup> Arch. *fr.* 16 (Gerber) = Stob. 1.6.3.

<sup>102</sup> For example, Arch. *fr.* 26 (Gerber) = P.Oxy. 2310 *fr.* 1 col. li, ed. Lobel:

ὦναξ Ἀπολλων, καὶ σὺ τοὺς μὲν αἰτίους  
πῆμαινε καὶ σφας ὅλλυ' ὥσπερ ὅλλεις,  
ἡγέας δὲ [

You too, lord Apollo, bring ruin upon the guilty and destroy them as you do, but us...

<sup>103</sup> Berry 1940: 9.



They are, therefore, active agents with limited and limiting control over human destinies. In Archilochus' works they are, at the very least, complimentary forces if not completely synonymous.

The idea that death is inescapable is one of the overarching themes of fate in early Greek literature. This is made explicit in Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar. It is also made clear in Stesichorus' *Thebaid*<sup>104</sup> in which Iokaste<sup>105</sup> is addressing Tiresias:

αἱ δέ με παῖδας ἰδέσθαι ὑπ' ἀλλάοις<ι> δαμέντας  
μόρσιμόν ἐστιν, ἐπεκλώσαν δὲ Μοῖρα[ι],  
αυτικά μοι θανάτου τέλος στυγερο[ιο] γέν[οιτο  
πρὶν ποκα ταῦτ' ἐσιδεῖν  
ἄλγεσ<σ>ι πολύστονα δακρυόεντα [  
παῖδας ἐνὶ μεγάροις  
θανότας ἢ πόλιν ἄλσαν.

But if it is destined that I see my sons slain each by the other and the Moirai have spun it, may the end of hateful death at once be mine before ever I see these lamentable tearful things (added?) to my sorrows, my sons dead in the palace or the city captured.<sup>106</sup>

For Solon, destiny and fortune are powers that the gods' control, but we return here to constructions which echo the θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα which we found in Homer. To Solon, as to Homer, it was in the inevitable end of life that m/Moira's reach was most keenly felt. Superficially, this was because death was something that occurred when a man's fated allotment of life comes to an end. Thus, in one example of this, Solon explains that τὴν δεκάτην δ' εἴ τις τελέσας κατὰ μέτρον ἵκοιτο, οὐκ ἂν ἄωρος ἑὼν μοῖαν ἔχοι θανάτου ('If man were to complete stage after stage and reach the tenth, he would not have death's allotment prematurely').<sup>107</sup> Solon also presents contradictory views on fate in his poetry. In one example, we find the concept of man's power to control his own destiny. Man must take responsibility for his 'self-willed' evil; here the gods are not necessarily the envious vindictive gods

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<sup>104</sup> Or *Seven Against Thebes*.

<sup>105</sup> Or Epicaste.

<sup>106</sup> Stes. *The*. 211-217 = fr. 222A (Campbell). trans. Campbell.

<sup>107</sup> Solon. fr. 27 (Gerber) = Philo, *de opif. mundi* 104 (i.36.8 Cohn-Wendland). trans. Gerber.

of fifth-century literature, and *moira* is, by and large, created and controlled by man himself, even when the result is contra to the god's wishes:

ἡμετέρη δὲ πόλις κατὰ μὲν Διὸς οὔ ποτ' ὀλεῖται  
αἴσαν καὶ μακάρων θεῶν φρένας ἀθανάτων:  
τοίη γὰρ μεγάθυμος ἐπίσκοπος ὀβριμοπάτρη  
Παλλὰς Ἀθηναίη χεῖρας ὑπερθεν ἔχει.  
αὐτοὶ δὲ φθείρειν μεγάλην πόλιν ἀφραδίῃσιν  
ἄστοι βούλονται, χρήμασι πειθόμενοι,  
δήμου θ' ἡγεμόνων ἄδικος νόος, οἷσιν ἐτοῖμον  
ὕβριος ἐκ μεγάλης ἄλγεα πολλὰ παθεῖν.

Through the dispensation of Zeus or the intentions of the blessed immortal gods; for such a stout-hearted guardian, Pallas Athena, born of a mighty father, holds her hands over it. But it is the citizens themselves who by their acts of foolishness and subservience to money are willing to destroy a great city, and the mind of the people's leaders is unjust; they are certain to suffer much pain as a result of their arrogance.<sup>108</sup>

Although Solon does not explicitly mention fate here, it is unmistakably contrary to statements he makes elsewhere, such as *Μοῖρα δέ τοι θνητοῖσι κακὸν φέρει ἢ δὲ καὶ ἐσθλόν, δῶρα δ' ἄφυκτα θεῶν γίγνεται ἀθανάτων* ('Moira brings good and ill to mortals and the fits of the immortal gods are inescapable').<sup>109</sup> Again, we must simply conclude that Solon is utilising a poetic personification of fate to illustrate the agenda of each poem.

In contrast to this, Theognis attributes all human existence to the will of the gods and appears to espouse a complete denial of human responsibility. Moira is an active destiny that sets, and controls, the limits of man's life. Even good deeds cannot triumph over divine power, and this feeds into his portrayal of death's inevitability. This sense of the inescapability of fate is carried on throughout his work, for example:

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<sup>108</sup> Solon, *fr.* 4.1-8. (Gerber) = Dem. 19.256. trans. Gerber.

<sup>109</sup> Solon, *fr.* 13.63-64. (Gerber) = Strob. 3.9.23. trans. Gerber.

οὔτις ἄποινα διδοὺς θάνατον φύγοι, οὐδὲ βαρεῖαν  
δυστυχίην, εἰ μὴ μοῖρ' ἐπὶ τέρμα βάλοι:  
οὐδ' ἂν δυσφροσύνης ὅτε δὴ θεὸς ἄλγεα πέμποι,  
θνητὸς ἀνὴρ δώροις ἰλάμενος προφύγοι.

No one can pay a ransom and avoid death or heavy misfortune, if fate (μοῖρα) does not set a limit, nor, although he wish to, can a mortal avoid mental distress through bribery, when the god sends pain.<sup>110</sup>

Other poets of the late archaic and early classical period are not as clear cut on the subject of *moira*, but generally espouse a view that the gods – in some form – were responsible for, and knowledgeable of, the future, however uncertain it was to them personally. Ibykus, in one text mentions that:

κράτ[ος  
]ύνοι μέγα δαί-  
μονες] πολὺν ὄλβον ἐδώ[καν  
οἷς κ' ἐθ]έλωσιν ἔχεν, τοῖς δ' α[ὐ  
βουλα]ῖσι Μοιρᾶν.

the gods give much prosperity to those whom they wish to have it,  
but for the others (they destroy it?) by the plans of the Moirai<sup>111</sup>

And, at one point, Bakchylides refers to Moira as the ἄμαχος δαίμων ('unconquerable god')<sup>112</sup> and in another he comments that:

ὅ τι μ[έ]ν ἐκ θεῶν μοῖρα παγκρατῆς  
ἄμμι κατένευσε καὶ Δίκας ῥέπει τά-  
λαντον, πεπρωμέν[α]ν  
αἶσαν [έ]κπλήσομεν, ὅτ[α]ν  
ἔλθῃ

Whatever all-powerful Moira has ordained for us from the gods and the scales of Justice confirm, we shall fulfil it as our destined portion when it comes.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Theog. *Eleg.* 1.1187-1190. trans. Greber.

<sup>111</sup> Iby. *fr.* 282A (Campbell) = P.Oxy. 2735. trans. Campbell.

<sup>112</sup> Bak. *fr.* 16.23 (Campbell).

<sup>113</sup> Bak. *fr.* 17.24-28 (Campbell). trans. Campbell.

Death and fate are always intimately interwoven, as Kallinos explains: θάνατος δὲ τότ' ἔσσεται, ὅππότε κεν δὴ Μοῖραι ἐπικλωσῳ' ('Death will occur come when the Moirai have spun it').<sup>114</sup>

### Fate in Cult

There is, in fact, little evidence to support an idea of wide-spread cultic worship of the Moirai, and no concrete evidence at all prior to the fifth century. In cult, the Moirai always appear in the plural, although this may be because, in the singular, *moira* conveyed the concrete meaning of portion too strongly, and was therefore viewed in a more abstracted way. The Moirai, on the other hand, were considered as the agents who action fate – 'the Moirai could be imagined as overlooking the course of life, active in shaping its different aspects before it even begins',<sup>115</sup> Eidinow comments. This appears to provide a plausible explanation for the lack of cult conducted to the (singular) goddess. Although it bears little resemblance to the identity constructed in Homer, the plural appears only once in the two Homeric poems,<sup>116</sup> there is a stronger connection to the goddesses found in Hesiod. Pausanias affords some evidence to the cultic inclusion of the Moirai in Greece.

Pausanias reports that in Athens there was an inscription at the temple of Aphrodite that declares that Οὐρανίαν Ἀφροδίτην τῶν καλουμένων μοιρῶν εἶναι πρεσβυτάτην ('Heavenly Aphrodite is the oldest of those called Moirai'),<sup>117</sup> and in the Olympieum, a temple of Zeus, there was an unfinished statue of Zeus which was attributed to Pheidias, above whose head were carved the Hoirai and the Moirai.<sup>118</sup> In Lakonia there was an altar in the sanctuary of the Graces with an image of the Moirai on it, alongside Demeter, Kore, Plouton, the Hoirai, Aphrodite, Athena and

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<sup>114</sup> Kall. *fr.* 1 (Gerber) = Stob. 4.10.12.

<sup>115</sup> Eidinow 2011b: 37.

<sup>116</sup> Hom. *Il.* 24.49.

<sup>117</sup> Paus. 1.19.2.

<sup>118</sup> Paus. 1.40.4.

Artemis;<sup>119</sup> and in Olympia, there was an altar to Zeus Μοιραγέτης ('bringer of fate') at the chariot race starting line, followed by an altar dedicated to the Moirai.<sup>120</sup> At the temple of Apollo in Delphi there is a statue of two of the Moirai accompanied by Zeus Μοιραγέτης and Apollo Μοιραγέτης.<sup>121</sup> A temple dedicated to Artemis 'Ἠγερόνης ('Leader') in Arkadia shows an image of the Moirai, alongside Zeus Μοιραγέτης, in a portico off to the right-hand side.<sup>122</sup> In front of the temple there was an altar dedicated to Demeter, and between two of the reliefs in the portico there was a tablet with descriptions of the mysteries. With the cult image of Artemis in the temple stands an image of Demeter, who holds a torch in one hand and lays the other upon Artemis. The connection to Demeter may become more significant when we consider that, as we have already seen above, on Mount Elaios in Arkadia, there is a sacred cave of Demeter. The locals believed that it was the Moirai who were able to persuade Demeter to lay aside her wrath following her rape by Poseidon.<sup>123</sup>

Thus far, the only evidence we have seen shows the Moirai being placed into the temples and sacred spaces of other divinities, and a possible emphasis on their connection to Demeter. Pausanias reports three main locations at which we may consider the Moirai to be given cult in their own rights. In Corinth, beside the temple of Demeter and Kore, there was a temple of the Moirai, although Pausanias comments that neither temple has images exposed to view.<sup>124</sup> The association between the Moirai and Persephone is fairly straightforward if one assumes that the local population equated Kore, the Maiden associated with fecundity, to Persephone, the queen of the Underworld. Association with Demeter may seem less clear, although instances in which dedications to the Moirai were conducted in conjunction with, or in close proximity to, cult activity directed towards Demeter

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<sup>119</sup> Paus. 3.19.4.

<sup>120</sup> Paus. 5.15.5.

<sup>121</sup> Paus. 10.24.4.

<sup>122</sup> Paus. 8.37.1.

<sup>123</sup> Paus. 8.42.3., and see discussion in chapter five.

<sup>124</sup> Paus. 2.4.7.

show that there was a high level of association between the goddess and the Moirai. This connection is reinforced when we consider that there is also evidence of cult association between the Moirai and the Erinyes, with whom Demeter had a special relationship.<sup>125</sup> In the Spartan agora, there was a sanctuary of the Moirai next to the grave of Orestes.<sup>126</sup> Although, the mythological association between Orestes and the Erinyes, the goddesses of vengeance who chased him down following his matricide, would not necessarily have been the first connection made between the grave and the sanctuary of the Moirai. What it shows, however, is that there is a connection between the Moirai and Orestes in Sparta, which we know from the close proximity of the sanctuary of the Moirai to Orestes' grave. The Erinyes, in turn, were closely connected to Orestes' myth. The Erinyes and the Moirai, too, share a connection; both as death-related Underworld gods, and as 'chthonic' divinities who are associated with fate, more generally, and punishment, more specifically.

More strikingly, however, in Corinth, there was an altar dedicated to the Moirai within a large open space in the grove that was connected to the sanctuary of the Eumenides.<sup>127</sup> Pausanias makes specific note of the fact that these goddesses were, in Athens, called the Semnai, connecting the Corinthian cult to that of the Semnai Theai at the Areopagos in Athens. At their altar, the Moirai were offered similar sacrifices to the Eumenides, including a pregnant ewe, honey and water, and flowers instead of the more regularly offered wreaths:

κατὰ δὲ ἔτος ἕκαστον ἑορτὴν ἡμέρα μιᾷ σφισιν ἄγουσι θύοντες πρόβατα ἐγκύμονα, μελικράτῳ δὲ σπονδῇ καὶ ἄνθεσιν ἀντὶ στεφάνων χρῆσθαι νομίζουσιν. εἰκότα δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ βωμῷ τῶν Μοιρῶν δρῶσιν: ὁ δὲ σφισιν ἐν ὑπαίθρῳ τοῦ ἄλσους ἐστίν.

Each year they hold a one day festival for them, slaughtering pregnant ewes, and making ritual use of a mixture of milk and honey and

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<sup>125</sup> See discussion in chapter five.

<sup>126</sup> Paus. 3.11.10.; cf. Welwei 2004: 225.

<sup>127</sup> Paus. 2.11.3-4.

flowers instead of garlands of leaves. They offer in much the same way on the altar of the Moirai which is in the grove in the open air.<sup>128</sup>

There is an abnormality which is common to sacrifices presented to the Eumenides and the Moirai: 'sober' sacrifices, the use of flowers rather than wreaths, and Aischylos suggests that the Athenian Semnai were sacrificed to at night and in silence.<sup>129</sup> The 'ritual kinship' between the two groups is, Bremmer suggests, 'manifested by the shared negative signs in their sacrifices'.<sup>130</sup> The sacrifice of pregnant animals could, in many cultic contexts, be included as a wholly negative sacrifice; particularly when the sacrifice appears, as it does here, with other 'negative' sacrificial activity. There were many goddesses who are reported to have received pregnant sacrificial victims,<sup>131</sup> not all of which could easily be categorised as 'chthonic' in the same way that the Eumenides and the Moirai. The one other significant recipient of pregnant sacrificial victims is Demeter, who is offered pregnant animals in cults all over Greece.<sup>132</sup> In various places in Attika, Demeter received pregnant sacrificial offerings in her guise as Chloe, whose Athenian temple was shared with Ge Kourotraphos in an area which was, Bremmer says, 'characterised by the propinquity of rather marginal gods'.<sup>133</sup> The cult of Demeter Chloe is primarily agricultural,<sup>134</sup> and she is one of the most prolific receivers of pregnant animals, leading to direct association with fecundity rituals. There is an inherent false-dichotomy between fertility and infertility; rather than being differentiated from one another, we should view them as two sides of the same coin.

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<sup>128</sup> Paus. 2.11.4. trans. Levi (with amendments).

<sup>129</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* 108-9.

<sup>130</sup> Bremmer 2005.

<sup>131</sup> Aside from the divinities discussed here, these include: Ge, Daeira, Theban Pelarge, Hera Antheia, Artemis, Athena Skiras, and Athena Polias, along with a small number of unnamed recipients. cf. Bremmer 2005: 156.

<sup>132</sup> For example: In Tetrapolis, *LSCG* 20 B 49; in Thorikos, *SEG* 33, 147.38, 44; in the Athenian deme of Paiania, *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 250.30; two separate festivals on Mykonos, one which has the odd prescription includes a pregnant sow whose back has been broken, *LSCG* 96.5-12, and another where she, Kore and Zeus Bouleus were given a sow 'pregnant for the first time', *LSCG* 96.15-17. For a full list see Bremmer 2005: 158-59.

<sup>133</sup> Bremmer 2005: 158.

<sup>134</sup> Parker 1987: 141.

As fertility informs infertility, so life informs death. The death of the pregnant animal, itself a symbol of fertility and life, in these 'abnormal' sacrifices,<sup>135</sup> demonstrates the strong connection between life and death. We have no indication that Demeter received pregnant sacrificial victims and the sites which were in close proximity to, or included within them, cult activity direct to the Moirai. We know that both divinities received this specific kind of sacrifice, in the context of abnormal, 'chthonic'-style cult activity; we also know that both divinities were associated with the Erinyes and the Eumenides, and that these divinities also received the same 'chthonic'-style pregnant sacrifice.

The Moirai are also connected to magic, curses, and figure prominently in the *Orphic Hymns*; so, coupled with the evidence that has already been detailed above, we can see that they have a small but clearly defined and solid cultic presence. The Moirai are invoked in a 'magical' papyrus titled Εὐχή πρὸς Σελήνην ἐπὶ πάσης πράξεως ('Prayer to Selene for any spell').<sup>136</sup> They are called to, along with other Underworld divinities, on at least one example of an Athenian curse tablet.<sup>137</sup> Although this tablet is second century, so we cannot write this idea back into the archaic or early classical periods, what it does show is that the Underworld aspect of the Moirai, already present in the archaic literature, continues to develop.

### Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter that Moira and Ker enjoyed a strong presence in Homeric literature, and this include both instances of fully realised anthropomorphism and instances in which agency was ascribed to non-personified forms through, for example, the addition of action-giving verbs. This strong profile continued through other early literature, including most notably Hesiod and Pindar.

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<sup>135</sup> That is, abnormal from the context of the straightforward ouranic/Olympic sacrifice.

<sup>136</sup> *PGM* IV. 2785; for full text and translation see Faraone 1991a: 199-202. Faraone 1991b: 199-202.

<sup>137</sup> *DT*. 74; cf. *DT*. 75, D. Collins 2008: 83.



What we discovered, however, was that Ker and the Keres did not receive attention outside this early period and they were not the recipients of cult activity. Moira and, increasingly the pluralised Moirai, did continue to receive attention in later literature. They were, also, involved in some cultic activity, although this was usually in the context of sanctuaries to other, more prominent, divinities. The peripheral way that the Moirai were treated in cultic terms indicates something of a subjugation of their powers as 'fate controllers' that was already becoming present in the archaic literature.

Divinities like the Moirai and Keres, who generally do not receive large cultic dedication, are utilised by worshipers for different purposes from those of 'major' death-related gods. These minor gods more often are used to say something meaningful about the state of death or dying. This is particularly true of the Keres, who represent a 'monstrous' death that is otherwise unrepresentable, particularly on battlefields that rely on the reputation of heroics and heroic deaths.

## Conclusion

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This study set out to investigate mythic representations of Underworld, or so-called 'chthonic' divinities in light of their contemporary associated cultic practice. Following on from this, is an examination of the ways that this cultic practice might have, in turn, influenced a contemporary understanding of these figures. By examining these divinities I have demonstrated that the death-related functions of the so-called 'chthonic' gods were not the principal factor in their characterisations, but rather were just one aspect – or, in one specific case, not an aspect at all – of a more nuanced identity. Generally, this thesis has demonstrated that the use of death-related divinities in cult and literature fundamentally support the supposition that the association with death was not the primary aspect of these divinities. While in the individual chapter conclusions I discussed the characterisation and cultic devotion of the specific divinity being examined, here I will draw together some more general conclusions regarding the way that death- or Underworld-related gods function within the mythic and cultic landscape. In particular I will draw out the major outcome of this study, which shows that death-related concerns are not the primary function of cultically active divinities.

To date, scholarship on death-related topics has focused primarily on two aspects: funerary rites or the experience of the deceased themselves. The picture presented of the Underworld inhabitants is often highly simplified to the King and Queen – Hades and Persephone<sup>1</sup> – and a 'retinue of attendants' made up of 'lesser' divinities including Thanatos, Charon, the Erinyes, the Moirai and the Keres. This highly simplified picture of the hierarchical structure of the Underworld is iconographically represented on Southern Italian vase paintings, mainly of the fourth century,<sup>2</sup> and in later literature as well, being particularly well articulated in

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Burkert 1985: 196; Mikalson 2010: 34; Mirto 2012: 15-16.

<sup>2</sup> Hoppin 1924: 435.

Orpheus' descent into the Underworld in Vergil's fourth *Georgic*,<sup>3</sup> and this Underworld is partly mirrored in the Nekyia of *Aeneid* book 6.<sup>4</sup> This hierarchical system functions in opposition to the complementary ouranic system, which Mikalson calls the 'divine royal family'.<sup>5</sup> This structure is, in many ways, used to facilitate the worship of the Olympian gods – worship at a 'panhellenic' level in which more locale-based nuances were overlooked for a cohesive representation.<sup>6</sup> The insinuation, then, with a complementary Underworld 'divine royal family' is that this, too, could be used to facilitate worship of these so-called 'chthonic' divinities. Following an exposition on the relationship between 'chthonic' and 'ouranic' divinities, I will briefly examine the individual divinities to demonstrate how this 'royal court' is viewed in light of the contemporary archaic and classical cultic and literary evidence examined throughout this thesis.

As we saw in chapter two, many of the current definitions of 'chthonic' give equal importance to Underworld chthonic and agrarian chthonic types of divinities and activities. However, the Greek usage does not support this, nor does it support a wholesale separation between the Underworld and agrarian contexts. Similarly, there is not a strong opposition between the ouranic and chthonic 'royal courts' of divinities as created in the scenario offered above. This reinforces the oversimplification of the hierarchical structure of the Underworld's inhabitants, and adds the creation of a false dichotomy between the two 'courts'. By investigating both the mythic characterisations and the cultic realities of these divinities, using the methodological approach of thin-coherence, we can see a different, more nuanced, picture begin to emerge. This demonstrates that death-related gods who receive cultic dedication are not principally concerned with death itself. More generally, this

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<sup>3</sup> Verg. *Geo.* 4.453-493.

<sup>4</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 6.208-887. Vergil's conceptualisation of the Underworld in the *Aeneid* contains textual references to a variety of sources, particularly including Homer and Pindar, and with elements of mystery cults. However, Vergil's Underworld is much more vividly conceptualised than many of these earlier representations. For further discussion of this see Bremmer 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Mikalson 2010: 34.

<sup>6</sup> See above discussion of panhellenism in Chapter 1; cf. Dowden 2007: 41-43.

thesis has shown that the ways that the Greeks viewed death and utilised death-related gods in cultic and literary representations support the idea that the association with death was not the primary aspect of any of these divinities.

In the 'traditional' view elucidated upon above Hades is often presented at the centre of the Underworld, as its main ruler. What we find in both literature and cult, however, is that Hades is a largely absent god who rarely exhibits influence over either the Underworld or the deceased. He is not the recipient of significant cultic activity in the archaic and classical Greek world, with only one proper cult in the western Peloponnesian city of Elis.<sup>7</sup> He is, instead, an 'unseen' divinity, and this is demonstrated in the etymology of his name as the 'unseen one'.<sup>8</sup> All but invisible in cult, the god becomes 'seen' and active at precisely the time that there is no need to offer prayer or dedication to him in order to ensure a better afterlife – that is, once a person has already died and entered the Underworld. The god's function, particularly regarding the structure of the Underworld, is that he endows the place with his own name. As the god has no concrete characterisation in early literature, when – as Herodotos comments – the theology of the Greeks was formed,<sup>9</sup> this could account for his lack of cultic dedication. There was no 'guise' with which worshipers could readily engage. Even in one particularly striking chthonic cult, that of Demeter Chthonia in Hermione, the role of king of the Underworld is filled by the apparent amalgamation of Hades and an indigenous hero-founder named Klymenos.<sup>10</sup> It is the latter who gives his name to the cultic dedications here, rather than the mythic King who gives his name to the Underworld.

Hesiod gives the only true mythic allusion to Hades and Persephone as the 'ruling couple' of the Underworld,<sup>11</sup> although the prevailing view shows the divine pair as king and queen of the Underworld. However, in literature Persephone is

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<sup>7</sup> See Paus. 2.65.2-3.

<sup>8</sup> Bremmer 2002: 4; Farnell 1907: 282. Beekes 1998: 18, 2010: 34; Kerényi 1974: 230.

<sup>9</sup> Hdt. 2.53.2.

<sup>10</sup> Paus. 2.35.4; *IG* IV 686-91, 715, 727, 1609; Lasos *fr.* 702 *PMG* (Page) = Athenaeus 14.624e; *SH* 676.

<sup>11</sup> Hes. *Th.* 768, 774.

often presented as a much more enigmatic and present ruler of the deceased who inhabit her realm and this is particularly true in the Homeric epics, particularly the *Odyssey* where Hades is absent.<sup>12</sup> However, her identity as 'queen of the Underworld' is not ubiquitous through literature and cult, nor even common. We are more likely to find Persephone shadowing her mother Demeter, in both myth and cult. This is true in cases where we might naturally expect to find a 'queen of the Underworld' narrative, such as those where there is a marriage, or implied marriage, between Persephone and Hades. This is most evident, as I discussed in chapter three, in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, where Persephone clearly does not attain the status of queen even though the strong implication is that she becomes Hades' wife.

The image of Persephone as queen of the Underworld also does not seem to be emphatically carried through into cultic activity. There is some cult activity in which this image may be alluded to iconographically but these contexts are generally not predicated upon Persephone being 'queen of the Underworld'. In chapter three I examined the Persephonean cult in the Southern Italian settlement of Lokroi because this case provides such a scenario. Here, the goddess is depicted in the pinakes in the guise of queen of the Underworld,<sup>13</sup> with iconographic attributes consistent with this.<sup>14</sup> Her role in the cult is not dependent upon this identification though. Rather, it is her role as bride and wife that is important contextually. Therefore, what we find is although Persephone is not presented here in subordination to Hades, her position in the cult still rests on his presence. Persephone is Queen of the Underworld almost incidentally, because she gains this position following her marriage to Hades. Her 'chthonic' pedigree is not the focus of cultic dedication, and although we can find aspects of both Underworld and agrarian types of chthonic identity this is not a 'chthonic' cult and cultic activity is

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<sup>12</sup> Hom. *Od.* 10.494, 11.213, 11.217, 11.226, 11.386.

<sup>13</sup> Redfield 2003a: 349; Sourvinou-Inwood 1978: 101.

<sup>14</sup> Such as pomegranates; cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1978: 108.

not grounded in chthonic ritual activity. As I have already explained, her chthonic-as-Underworld lineage only serves to highlight her role as bride and wife. Similarly, the chthonic-as-agrarian foundations in this cult, shown mainly through iconographic attributes depicted on the pinakes,<sup>15</sup> are used to highlight not agricultural fecundity but human fertility, and therefore to reinforce the role of the new bride.

Mythically, the hierarchical structure of the Underworld's 'royal court' is furnished with a 'retinue of attendants', many of whom to do receive significant cultic activity. This includes Thanatos (and to a lesser extent Hypnos), and Charon, figures we might expect to find dedication to in a cultic setting as 'agents' of death. Unlike Persephone, and other major 'chthonic' gods,<sup>16</sup> these divinities are, primarily, focused on their 'death-related' function. Thanatos, for instance, is death personified and Charon's principal function is to transport the souls of the deceased into the Underworld. This phenomenon is particularly visible in the case of the Keres, whose profile as bloodthirsty death-mongers in early literature translates into total absence within the cultic landscape of the Greek world. Only in cases where death-related function can be actively supplemented by another function does cultic activity occur, as in the case of the Moirai. The Keres and the Moirai appear to serve similar functions in a death-related context, as harbingers of death, particularly in early literature. However, the primary function of the Moirai is to effectuate fate more generally rather than just the accomplishment of bringing death. The death-related function of the Moirai is basically incidental to their wider, more general, function as goddesses of fate. Alongside this, we also find the increasing development of an overlap between the Moirai and the goddess Tyche, 'Fortune' rather than simply fate. The lack of cultic dedication to divinities whose primary function is death-related is widely demonstrated not only by cases such as

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<sup>15</sup> Such as stalks of grain and twigs; cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1973: 18, 1978: 108.

<sup>16</sup> Like Demeter, who will be discussed in more detail below.

Thanatos or Charon, but also by Hades who, as we saw above, only receives very minor cultic dedication.

Alongside these primarily death-related divinities who receive little or no cult in the archaic and classical Greek religious landscape, we find the inclusion of one divinity in particular who has no 'chthonic' or death-related function in this period. Hekate is often included in the entourage of Underworld divinities because of much later assertions to her chthonic character being 'read back' into her earlier characterisations. This lack of chthonic attribute is despite the fact she plays such an important role in the recovery of Persephone from the Underworld in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. This is the only instance in early literature in which she takes on something akin to a psychopompic role, and even within the Hymn itself it is Hermes, not Hekate, who physically retrieves the young goddess from the Underworld. As we saw in chapter six, in later literature, and certainly in some iconographic representations, Hekate is given a more prominent position in the retrieval of Persephone from the Underworld, but this does not appear to be the case in early literature. Alongside this, there is no evidence that there was any aspect of Hekate worshiped at Eleusis, or in any of the other festivals for which the hymn may be aetiological, such as the Thesmophoria.

Demeter does not necessarily fit into the hierarchical structure of the Underworld, and her literary representations and cultic worship place her more squarely in the ouranic 'court' than the chthonic one. However, she is an example of a divinity who can demonstrate how the relationship between ouranic and chthonic aspects is more nuanced and complex than the dichotomised reading that is often presented in definitions, like those examined in chapter two. Her familial association with Persephone, and with a lesser extent to Hades, gives her a chthonic pedigree, while her role as a giver of life and agrarian plenty motivated much of her cultic observances throughout the Greek world.<sup>17</sup> The strong links, which have been

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<sup>17</sup> For example, in Attika alone we find the festivals Proerosia, Thesmophoria, Haloa, Chloaia, and Skira, and the Lesser Mysteries and the Eleusinian Mysteries also have agricultural connotations.

repeatedly emphasised in this thesis and will be discussed in further detail below, between life and death, fertility and infertility, and plenty and barrenness also characterise the agrarian/fertility and non-agrarian/fertility aspects of Demeter. What we find in the cultic record is very little evidence for a 'chthonic' characterisation of Demeter in the archaic and classical periods. While the majority of chthonic cults of Demeter are only known from Pausanias' much later writing, this does not preclude these cults from having existed in these earlier periods. This is evident in the existence of the cult of Demeter Chthonia in Hermione, where we found some much earlier corroborating evidence for the cult's existence (though not with the level of ritual detail provided by Pausanias).

In terms of the larger picture, the evidence shows that chthonic cults were not widespread, and were probably not highly popular – one Demetrian cult in particular fell out of use until an oracle from Delphi ordered its reinstatement to stave off a famine.<sup>18</sup> The extent to which chthonic cults had wide-spread popularity is largely unimportant to a discussion of their place in the cultic landscape. A divinity with wholly death-related attributes is unlikely to receive the same level of cultic attention as a divinity who is immediately accessible for dedication or is perceived as having a more positive benefit to offer the worshiper. That any god, but here specifically Demeter because of her crucial role as a provider of agrarian plenty, receives 'chthonic' type worship is significant. This shows that Greeks – or at least some Greeks – considered that there was some worth in forming relationships with these 'chthonic', and potentially maleficent, divinities. This in turn indicates that they were, in fact, viewed as having some kind of benefit to society or to individual worshipers.

The extent of this benefit can be illuminated by the presence of recognisable, contrasting tropes in both cult and myth. Examples of these tropes have occurred throughout this thesis and primarily include death/fertility, death/agriculture, and death/marriage. These contrasting tropes can be viewed in two distinct ways. First,

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<sup>18</sup> Paus. 8.42.6.



as binary oppositions that manifest in cult; for example, a seed buried in the ground can be a manifestation of a death/agriculture dichotomy by indicating both agrarian fertility and being analogous to the burial of the dead. Second, as opposing pairs which interact with one another in nuanced ways, which occurs when the contrasted opposition (that is, whatever is being compared with 'death' in each particular case) can have cultic or mythic actions which correspond to one another. These oppositions, then, impact on the performative actions of other opposite pairs in ways which become actively comparable. The performance of a 'marriage' trope in a cultic setting, in the Lokrian cult of Persephone, for example, might be identical or near-identical to the performance of an 'agriculture' trope at the Eleusinian Mysteries. In both cases, the social purpose of the trope is the promotion of fecundity (human fertility at Lokroi and agricultural fertility in Eleusis) and this is represented by the same iconographical and mythological attributes presented at each cult site. For example, stalks on grains appear on artefacts from both sanctuaries,<sup>19</sup> as do representations of Triptolemos.<sup>20</sup> The overriding narrative that is present in the mythic heritage of each cult is the abduction of Persephone. Therefore, we can see that while these oppositions exist within the isolation of a single cult, they are also closely linked together throughout the Greek world. This is possible because of the exchange of semiotic vocabulary that occurs in both social and religious contexts throughout the Greek world.

This thesis has highlighted that the strict dichotomisation between the chthonic and ouranic that is implied in definitions of the 'chthonic' are not present within the Greek cultic landscape of the archaic and early classical periods. What we have found is, contrary to much scholarly work on chthonic divinities or ritual practices, that we should view the ouranic-chthonic dichotomy as a sliding scale, on which a divinity can appear closer to one end in one context, and closer to the other

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<sup>19</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1973: 18.

<sup>20</sup> Triptolemos appears as one of the figures offering dedication to the enthroned Persephone in the Dedication pinakes at Lokroi. See Clinton 1992: 58 n. 168; Sourvinou-Inwood 1978: 105-06; Zancani Montuoro 1955: 9-10.

in another. What we find is that cult is paid to so-called 'chthonic' divinities whose death-related function is concomitant to another, more immediately necessary, function, such as agrarian or human fertility. This accounts for the close association between death and agrarian fecundity in ritual practice.

What this thesis has fundamentally demonstrated is that the death- or Underworld-related functions of many the 'chthonic' divinities, particularly in terms of the cultic dedication paid to them, are either incidental, closely tied to fertility or their mythic aspect simply does not translate into meaningful cultic dedication. That is not to say that these divinities who do receive cult are not concerned with or related to death or the Underworld. So-called 'chthonic' divinities who receive cultic dedication still have an association with death, through iconographic representations in the cultic setting or a mythic heritage which includes a death- or Underworld-related function. The interest that these gods have with death directly refers to other areas of interest, and this is where the contrasting tropes, death/fertility, death/agriculture, and death/marriage, gain ritual purchase. Divinities who do not transcend their death-related mythic heritage, such as Thanatos or Charon, do not receive cultic dedication. However, even with these divinities we can see how death is not a distinct area of divine concern but it rather permeates other areas of Greek life. In cases where Charon, for instance, is depicted on funerary vases receiving the deceased or transporting the deceased into the Underworld the focus on the image still tends to be the *sema* or tombstone.<sup>21</sup> This shows that death is a concern that infiltrates the world of the living, rather than being separated from it. Death practices are, broadly, more concerned with life than with the end of life.

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<sup>21</sup> Oakley 2004: 113-25. For explicit examples see *LIMC* s.v. Charon I 33a, 36.

## Appendix 1: Approaching Death in Archaic and Classical Greece

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Death practices are, for the most part, more about life than about death. That is, ideas about death are generally informed directly by notions and concepts of life, and much of what occurs in death-related ritual practice is focused on living survivors, rather than on veneration of the deceased. In archaic and classical Greece, as in many cultures, religious ideas about death evolve out of a desire to understand death, and what awaits the dying individual.<sup>1</sup> Along with any theological considerations, there are the very real emotional difficulties that surviving friends and relatives feel when thinking about their loved one as being no longer alive. Through this emotional, religious, and philosophical turmoil, suppositions about the 'life' of the dead come about, which may result in a conception of the deceased person as 'differently alive' and perhaps still capable of interacting with the living world. In part this is reflected as a denial of mortality, through which, as Stafford and Herrin comment, 'we are able to deny death and maintain the fiction of our own immortality or of the continued existence, in some form, of significant others who have died'.<sup>2</sup>

There are three main considerations when discussing death-related belief systems: the way in which the living regards the deceased, ideas about what occurs following death, and the carrying-out of physical burial practices and funerary rites. While these considerations do inform and change one another, they also act independently, and a single society may concurrently hold contradictory views relating to different aspects of death. This appendix aims to set out a blueprint for general death-related beliefs found across the Greek world roughly during the

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<sup>1</sup> For an excellent introduction to death-related anthropological theory, see Burton 2005: 25-34.

<sup>2</sup> Burton 2005: 32.

archaic and classical periods. However, even with the creation of a very general map we must be wary of ascribing a system of beliefs that is too invasive to the privately held, shifting and changing ideas about death and the Underworld that occur over the Greek world in these periods.

To the Greeks, death as a journey during which the deceased left the world of the living and arrived into the world of the dead. Although certain aspects of this journey changed over time, the general idea remained as an integral component of death-belief. The *psyche* (roughly 'soul', though without the moral connotations of the Christianised concept of the soul) of the man killed on the Homeric battlefield fled his body for the Underworld,<sup>3</sup> just as the deceased classical Athenian travelled from this world into the netherworld by way of boat.<sup>4</sup> The two worlds were separate and the 'other' world was only accessible to the deceased, except in particularly exceptional circumstances.<sup>5</sup> Preoccupation with creating a clear distinction between life and death is a feature of many cultures,<sup>6</sup> and efforts to create an increasingly stronger delineation between the living and the dead, in archaic and classical Greece, include the propagation of the idea that the deceased had a polluting influence to those who encountered them, and legislative changes.

The Homeric dead were presented as weak and ineffectual and although this may be an over-simplified explanation of their representation within the epic poems, and it does not indicate that archaic Greeks felt this way about the deceased. The idea of weak-dead is found in other literary and visual sources from the archaic and early classical periods, although not usually to the extent of the Homeric 'witless' dead. The weak-dead trope is shown in mythic examples where the dead must enlist divine assistance in order to avenge themselves against living people who

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Burton 2005.<sup>3</sup> Hom. *Il.* 5.296, 696; 8.123, 315; 14.518; 16.453, 856; 22.362, 467; *Od.* 10.560; 11.65. cf. Bremmer 1983: 74; Garland 1981; Griffin 1980: 91.

<sup>4</sup> This is first shown in the lost epic poem the *Minyad*, where Charon, the ferryman, takes the deceased across the Acheron in a boat. Garland 1985, 1989; Mirto 2012.

<sup>5</sup> For example, both Herakles and Theseus mythically entered the Underworld while alive, and in the cult of Hades as Lord of the Dead in Elis the priest would enter the temple – thereby symbolically entering the Underworld – once per year.

<sup>6</sup> Jones 2010: 18.

have caused them injury in life. Garland, in *The Greek Way of Death*, uses the example of Klytaimestra procuring the Erinyes' aid to avenge her murder.<sup>7</sup> He asserts that this concept was appropriated into society and this was demonstrable in the procedures of Athenian law courts, where citizens placed trust in the courts to act on their behalf. By doing so, rather than attempting to enact justice themselves, they enshrined the court to provide just punishment and retribution. Examples of this include individuals and families prosecuting persons accused of murdering their relative, or slandering their deceased relative's name.<sup>8</sup> In these cases, the living family members took on the role of the slighted party, although they were officially acting on behalf of their deceased relative. This shows that the concern was for the reputations and livelihoods of surviving family members and that the deceased had little or no power to avenge wrongs against him in life.<sup>9</sup>

The weak-dead motif is reflected in other aspects of interaction between the living and the dead. For instance, the process of burying *katadesmoi* in cemeteries<sup>10</sup> does not indicate that the dead have any particular power over the living, but that they can act as messengers between the living and the 'chthonic', Underworld dwelling gods who *were* in a position to be able to punish the living. This idea comes from the discovery of certain terms found on the *katadesmoi* that most often

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<sup>7</sup> Garland 1985: 6.

<sup>8</sup> Garland 1989; MacDowell 1963.

<sup>9</sup> Oakley and Sinos 1993: 171; Oakley 2004: 319. Thus, family involvement, which was such a central feature of pre-classical homicide trials, remained a feature of classical Athenian homicide customs, though they were no longer able to proscribe punishments, relatives of the victim were responsible for the initial indictment being made against the suspected murderer. Indictment was achieved by the issue of a formal accusation by one relative of the victim, who was then required to serve the accused with a judicial summons, in front of witnesses, instructing the accused to appear before the Basileus to answer the charges. The relative who has issued both the warning and summons to the accused was then required to act as prosecutor in trial. By keeping the victim's relatives directly involved in the process of accusation and trial classical homicide laws acted as a limitation to private revenge while still allowing slighted family members to actively participate in the bringing about of justice for their relative. see Lys. 6.12; Ar. *Vesp.* 1041-1042; Pl. *Leg.* 871b-c.

<sup>10</sup> While the majority of *katadesmoi* are found buried in graves, sometimes even placed in the hand of the deceased, they have also been found in sanctuaries of divinities who have some association with the Underworld, particularly Demeter. See Ogden 2008: 139.

appear in legal contexts.<sup>11</sup> The use of these terms indicates that this type of divine justice, in which the Underworld gods are appealed to through an intermediary shade, is carried out in the same way legal appeals, which were directed through the prosecutor for the *dikastai* ('judges') to rule on. The expectation was that the divinity, usually Hermes, Demeter, Persephone, Hekate, or Ge,<sup>12</sup> would take note of the request and set the curse in motion. The only duty of the shade in the curse transaction was ensure delivery to the appropriate divinity. Here, although the shade was unable to directly take part in avenging the living they are not the 'witless' deceased of Homer. Individuals would not entrust their cursing or binding spells to a deceased shade who would not be able to hear, read, or understand the tablet or spell. This shows that the living regarded the dead as having some semblance of understanding. But, what was the function of the dead in these magical interactions? Riess comments that:

Rituals typically require an audience in order to be effective; thus, at first glance, the lack of observers seems to be a defining feature of magic. In deed, the audience of a magical ritual is often thought to be identical to its performer, making the performer and the recipient of a magic ritual one and the same person. On this view, the message of a collective ritual is directed at an entire group, but the message of a magician is relevant only to himself. Given the information we have today, however, this can hardly be true.<sup>13</sup>

We might view, then, the deceased not only as couriers of curses but also the spectators that give magic spells their audience.

Hermes' prevalence in receiving curse requests of this kind in the classical period may indicate the beginning of his increased importance in dealing directly with the dead.<sup>14</sup> The *katadesmoi* show a noticeable lack of dedication to divinities to whom we might assume would be directly involved in retributive acts against the

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<sup>11</sup> In fact, the connection between the *katadesmoi* and legal cases is particularly strong – a large portion of *katadesmoi* seek to bind the asker's opponent in a legal battle of some kind. See Faraone 1999: 111; Graf 1997: 123–24.

<sup>12</sup> Eidinow 2007: 148.

<sup>13</sup> Riess 2012: 187.

<sup>14</sup> Johnston 1999: 74.

living, such as the Erinyes.<sup>15</sup> The tablets involve gods who have a direct relationship with the dead, and are not just those who live in the Underworld, which shows that the named deity was not necessarily the actor of the curse but rather took on the role of being its 'supervisor'.<sup>16</sup> Ge or Hermes – or any of the named gods – could, for instance, procure the services of vengeance deities – like the Erinyes – in order to act out a curse that had been dedicated to them, in much the same way as Klytaimestra enlisted the Erinyes in Aischylos' *Eumenides*. All this, according to Garland, indicates that the living were not fearful of the deceased, but rather were willing to use them as intermediaries between themselves and the Underworld gods. There is some contradictory evidence that there was a fear of the dead themselves, as a number of magic spells have been found that contain explicit instructions for warding off attacks made by angry ghosts, whether sent by a living enemy or through the ghost's own volition.<sup>17</sup> While this evidence is from the fourth century, and this is therefore late in comparison with our other evidence, the text and format of the spells appear to be copied from much earlier sources and this shows a continuation of earlier practices and beliefs.<sup>18</sup> That there is evidence for both fearful and fearless attitudes towards the deceased show a religious society that is not wholly congruent. It is not unreasonable to expect that some members of society might hold fears that other members do not share, or that in different circumstances individuals might act in ways that are not necessarily cohesive, for example, where a single individual has a fear of certain categories of the dead, but not of other categories.<sup>19</sup> This non-congruence feeds into the framework of thinly-coherent macro- and micro-communities, which have a semblance similarity in their semiotic language but also present non-problematic contradiction in beliefs.

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<sup>15</sup> Johnston 1999: 74. However, see also Johnston 1994: 140. In this, Johnston claims that the Erinyes are the invoked subject on certain *katadesmoi*. These, however, would appear to be an exception to normal practice.

<sup>16</sup> Johnston 1999: 72-73.

<sup>17</sup> Faraone 1991b: 182.

<sup>18</sup> Faraone 1991b: 180.

<sup>19</sup> See below for further discussion of categories of the dead.

Finally, we must consider Garland's initial assumption that the dead must seek assistance from powerful Underworld divinities in order to enact revenge upon the living. In his example, cited above, Klytaimestra must appeal to the Erinyes to assist her quest for vengeance against Orestes. Aischylos' *Eumenides* certainly depicts the shade of Klytaimestra relying on these goddesses of vengeance to assist her, but she is not subservient to them. On the contrary, she stands as their ruler, issuing demands that they carry out obediently. And, when they do not meet her high expectations she chides them. Her position over them is obvious in her language. For instance, when attempting to rouse them from sleep she uses her own name as to call them, indicating that this holds power over them: φρονήσατ', ὦ κατὰ χθονὸς θεαί. ὄναρ γὰρ ὑμᾶς νῦν Κλυταιμῆστρα καλῶ ('be mindful, you goddesses from beneath the earth: I call you now in your dream, I am Klytaimestra').<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere, she threatens them with violence for failing to submit to her will: ἄλγησον ἥπαρ ἐνδίκους ὀνειδέσιν: τοῖς σώφροσιν γὰρ ἀντίκεντρα γίγνεται ('feel a stab of pain in your liver at these reproaches: to the wise they act as goads').<sup>21</sup> Her reproach is not empty; her words inflict physical pain on them in punishment. Far from demonstrating the ineffectual character of the shades, what this actually shows is the power and influence that Klytaimestra wields over the Erinyes. While we cannot take this to mean that there was a belief that all shades had the power to instruct divinities like the Erinyes, what it does show is that there was a clear consideration that some shades, in some circumstances, were very powerful. If a shade has a level of power over divinities then they must also be capable of directly influencing the living world.

What the *katadesmoi* show is one aspect of the shift in death-related beliefs that occurred in the archaic and early classical periods. Prior to this shift, shades may have been considered, by some, to be weak, with no power to harm or influence the living, but the increased prevalence of *katadesmoi* demonstrates that

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<sup>20</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* 115-116.

<sup>21</sup> Aisch. *Eum.* 135-136.



the living world was starting to show a new respect for the power of the dead. Alongside this, there was, by the fifth century there, an increasing amount of interaction with the dead being instigated by the living. Johnston argues that this shows that the living had started to believe that the dead had certain inherent powers that they had not previously had.<sup>22</sup> The way the dead are characterised in the Homeric epics certainly shows that they are, generally, witless, weak, and powerless to assist the living in all but the most exceptional of circumstances. Representations of the dead contemporary to Homer still exhibited the weak-dead motif, although this often manifests as powerlessness rather than witlessness. The major changes that are being presented include both the increasing awareness of the deceased themselves and that the living are soliciting their assistance, even in some cases in which the living person was not related to, and had no other association with, the deceased person.<sup>23</sup>

This shift is demonstrative of a wider social restructuring and widespread changes in religious beliefs and practices. Sourvinou-Inwood has argued that this began to take place due to pervasive social restratification and the move from small, relatively isolated villages into larger, well-connected settlements in the early eighth century.<sup>24</sup> Social reorganisation, necessitated by a population boom in the closing decades of the dark ages and the early archaic period, forced the creation of the *polis* social structure. Alongside this, technological advances, including the reintroduction of writing, helped to create a more global 'panhellenic mentality, especially in the sphere of religion'.<sup>25</sup> This was further facilitated by inclusive, inter-state 'Greek' sanctuaries, such as Delphi and Olympia, where cultural and religious interchange might have been fostered, and the mentality was heavily influenced by the spread of the works of Homer and Hesiod throughout the Greek world.

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<sup>22</sup> Johnston 1999: 75, 85-86.

<sup>23</sup> Johnston 1999: 74-75.

<sup>24</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981. This chapter forms the basis for sections of chapter two 'Afterlife in the Homeric Poems: Text and Belief' in Sourvinou-Inwood 1995.

<sup>25</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 16.

However, I do not feel with any conviction that there was a 'panhellenic mentality' that was created, even by the spread of Homer and Hesiod's works. As discussed in chapter one, the extent to which the Greek *poleis* considered themselves to be a unified whole was fairly minor and although they did share some large-scale religious events, this hardly qualifies as a reason to imagine that there was a conscious attempt at wholesale cohesion. Any congruence should be seen as a by-product of the network of macro- and micro-communities that served to influence one another's semiotic language and ritual.

These literary works would have spread ideas about the gods, and, therefore, also about death, particularly as different societies would have placed their own inflection over the belief system represented in the poems. As such, the final 'versions' of the Homeric epics, which are now extant, most likely represent an amalgamation of disparate beliefs from various settlements in the Greek-speaking world. Thus, the views expressed about death and dying within them are not the ideology of a single person or group, but represent a conflation of beliefs that loosely, as Sourvinou-Inwood says, 'corresponds to the actual nexus of attitudes of the eighth century'.<sup>26</sup> As the belief system evolves over time, society passes through a transitory phases in which both 'older' and 'newer' beliefs may be simultaneously

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<sup>26</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 16. Although, she comments, this conflation is further complicated by the probability of multiple authors, both prior to and post writing, which may have changed elements found within the poems to facilitate their accessibility to the contemporary audience to which they were being presented or performed. See also Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 12-13, 14. Here, Sourvinou-Inwood treats the 'conflation' of ideologies as one religious system with the sole exception of *Odyssey* Book 24. She purposefully takes this approach in order to view the Homeric 'system' as an artificial structure created by a poet who was simultaneously influenced by older and newer ideological frameworks. However, the other side of this argument may show that population expansion did not directly influence local religious belief, particularly beliefs about death. I. Morris' article 'Attitudes toward Death in archaic Greece' argues directly against Sourvinou-Inwood's assertion that population expansion and the associated social change directly affected beliefs about death. Morris argues that Sourvinou-Inwood's idea of 'urbanisation' is an inappropriate conceptualisation of social stratification for the Greeks, and considers her analogy to Medieval France to be misguided. Morris also takes issue with Sourvinou-Inwood's methodological choices, in particular that her study is based on the system of P. Airès (also utilised by Johnston in *Restless Dead*) and the simplicity with which this system renders the complex and changing landscape of death related beliefs. Sourvinou-Inwood, in response, reasserts and refines her methodological study within an appendix of *'Reading' Greek Death*. See I. Morris 1989: 302-03.

considered to be influencing cultic activity depending on the appeal of each separate belief.<sup>27</sup>

A large part of the apparent contradictions about death belief centre on the ways in which the dead are imagined. This is particularly true within the Homeric epics. If we adopt a system of inter-community belief 'conflation' this contradiction becomes easy to explain; the dead are imagined as being mute and witless in some communities and, elsewhere, are believed to appear as they did in life. However, if we examine representations of the deceased in the poems through the lens of memory construction we find that they can be simultaneously remembered in multiple ways – in much the same way that the gods can be conceptualised simultaneously in different guises. It is not contradictory that the dead are represented as being both mute and lifeless, as they would have been after death during funerary rituals, and animated and appearing to be alive, as they would have been throughout their lives. For instance, in the *Iliad*, the recently deceased Patroklos appears to Achilles exactly as he was in life;<sup>28</sup> here, Achilles' memory of his deceased friend is so strong that there is no trouble in Patroklos appearing to him *exactly* as he would have in life. Nevertheless, over time memory fades and, as Bremmer comments, 'it is understandable that the more personal traits gradually withdraw behind a more general idea of the dead as opposed to the living'.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, an individual would find it easier to construct a 'living' memory for a person they had known in life, than for a deceased stranger. Following this scheme, the change in representation between the mute and witless shade and those who are, or become during the course of exchange with the living person, more lifelike (either though drinking blood, as occurs in *Odyssey* eleven or through other means) is not a conflation or amalgamation of older and newer death-related beliefs. It is rather that socially constructed memory is likely to fade over time but also be reignited

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<sup>27</sup> Garland 1985: 119, 71 n. 19; Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 15-39, 1995: 412-44.

<sup>28</sup> Hom. *Il.* 23.65-107.

<sup>29</sup> Bremmer 1983: 88-89.

though the consciousness of the living participant. This functions simultaneous to, and in the same manner as, ideas constructed and shared by overlapping religious communities being altered to suit the context of each community's need.

Memory is an integral component of death-related beliefs, whether by a living person creating an apparition of the dead by way of memory construction or imagining the deceased forming their own being by self-constructed memory. In the latter case, the living would write the name of their deceased relative clearly on the grave marker in the hope that the shade would recognise their name and this would lead to the retention of other mental faculties.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, the so-called 'Orphic' gold tablets<sup>31</sup> present memory, and its deified personification Mnemosyne, as paramount to the deceased gaining entrance into the netherworld. Tablets often include instruction on how to properly select the correct spring to drink from in order to regain memories from life.<sup>32</sup> One tablet begins Μνημοσύνας τόδε ἔργον ('This is the work of Mnemosyne'),<sup>33</sup> another likely echoes this sentiment further in the text,<sup>34</sup> a number of other tablets refer to τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἄπο λίμνης ('the lakes of Memory'),<sup>35</sup> and one refers to the bearer of the tablet being asked to δέχε<σ>θε Μνημοσύνης τόδε δῶρον ('accept this gift of Memory').<sup>36</sup> Mnemosyne is invoked to enable Orphic initiands to 'remember the ritual' that allows them entrance to the afterlife.<sup>37</sup> Given that we have seen that remember one's own name can help trigger the memory-retention of faculties exhibited in life, a similar 'chain

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<sup>30</sup> Vermeule 1979: 27.

<sup>31</sup> Citations from the tablets refer to Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008; Edmonds 2011; Graf and Johnston 2007.

<sup>32</sup> On the presence of two fountains at the entrance to the netherworld, see Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 29-35; Janko 1984: 91.

<sup>33</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: L1; Edmonds 2011: B10; Graf and Johnston 2007: 1.

<sup>34</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: L2; Edmonds 2011: B1; Graf and Johnston 2007: 2. Graf's reconstruction of the text reads [Μνημοσύ]νης τόδ<ε> ἔ[ργον---. See Graf and Johnston 2007: 6. Edmonds takes a more cautious approach in his reconstruction, citing [Μνημοσύ]νης τόδε [†επιον†-, translating this as 'This [is the?... of Memory...]' see Edmonds 2011: 22-23.

<sup>35</sup> Graf/Johnston 1,2,8,25; (in the corresponding order) Bernabé/ Jiménez L1, L3, L2, L4; Edmonds B10, B1, B11, B2. Graf and Johnston 2007: 1, 2, 8, 25.; in the corresponding order Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: L1, L3, L2, L4; Edmonds 2011: B10, B1, B11, B2.

<sup>36</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: L11; Graf and Johnston 2007: 9.

<sup>37</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2011: 75.

of memory' is at work here. As we saw in the case of Achilles' memory of recently deceased Patroklos in the *Iliad* recent memories creates a sharper picture of the deceased; and keeping the memory of a loved one alive enhances their reputation. Mnemosyne, in the 'Orphic' lamellae, fulfils the function of the remembering relative of friend left behind<sup>38</sup> and also enables the deceased to begin to regain their own memory.

The actual process of death involved multiple stages through which the deceased's surviving relatives were required to undertake the appropriate ritual action to ensure that death was completed properly. This process may be regarded as an on-going separation from the world of the living, and the shade could only enter the Underworld following the correct completion of ritual burial.<sup>39</sup> Death is not instantaneous.<sup>40</sup> Although complex in structure, funerary rites were often performed without the assistance of a religious professional, and legal reforms regarding activities associated with the funerary rites demonstrate that Athenians, at least, liked to show their grief loudly and publically. Legal reforms of funerary practices and the wholesale demolition of earlier grave monuments in the classical period provided an avenue for publically speaking out against the privileged position of past aristocracy.<sup>41</sup> Death could be seen as an equaliser, and it certainly becomes more socio-economically equal following reforms that included legislated cost prohibitions, noise reduction and the banning of professional mourners.<sup>42</sup>

Funerary ritual and burial rites can be roughly broken into three main acts; *prosthesis*, or laying out the body and including washing or cleaning both the body and the deceased's house, *ekphora*, or conveyance to the place of interment, and finally deposition of the cremated or inhumed remains.<sup>43</sup> Washing the house and

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<sup>38</sup> Herrero de Jáuregui 2011: 289.

<sup>39</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 18.

<sup>40</sup> Vermeule 1979: 2.

<sup>41</sup> Garland 1985: 122.

<sup>42</sup> For an overview of funeral-related legislation in Athens see Garland 1989: 1-15.

<sup>43</sup> This is an amalgamation of the tripartite ritual burial systems presented by Garland and Vermeule. See Garland 1985: 21; Vermeule 1979: 19. For a full discussion of each stage of the funerary ritual see Garland 1985: 21-27; Kurtz and Boardman 1971: 142-61.

body formed an important aspect of the funerary ritual and acted as a way of cleansing, or at least beginning the process of cleansing, any pollution created by the death and the corpse. Death-related pollution was not necessarily considered to be a negative force; rather it was an aspect of mourning.<sup>44</sup> The level of pollution incurred by the living from the dead, in most cases, corresponded directly to the relationship between the two in life, and the level of pollution in some relationships was regulated by legal codification. Periods of purification could have corresponded to the amount of time that the *psyche*, or 'soul', of the deceased spent between the worlds of the living and the dead. Contrary to this, the deceased himself could be considered as a pure or 'sacred' object.<sup>45</sup> Concepts of pollution surrounding death were not only sentimental in nature but also founded in practical, physical hygienic considerations that needed to be accounted for when moving around the decomposing corpse.<sup>46</sup> The *lex sacra* from Kyrene indicates that pollution related to death began even prior to birth. The law states that:

αἱ κα γυνὰ ἐβάλῃ, αἱ μέγ κα διάδηλον ἦι, μ[ι]-  
αίνονται ὥσπερ ἀπο θανόντος: αἱ δέ κα μὴ  
διάδηλον ἦι, μιάινεται αἰτὰ ἃ οἰκία καθάπε[ρ]  
ἀπὸ λεχός.

If a woman miscarries, if it is recognisable, they are polluted as if by a corpse. If it is not recognisable, the house itself is polluted as if by childbirth.<sup>47</sup>

Different kinds of death created different levels of pollution, even beyond the 'normal' pollution that any corpse would impose upon a household. Failure to undertake proper burial, even for strangers, was thought to have a polluting effect on those who failed to tend to the bodies.

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<sup>44</sup> Parker 1983: 35.

<sup>45</sup> Garland 1985: 47.

<sup>46</sup> Garland 1985: 43.

<sup>47</sup> LSS 115, B106-109. Edited text and translation Robertson 2010: 262, 66.

The sentimental nature of pollution concepts surrounding the corpse were mirrored in the ways in which personal grief was performed. Although there was an acceptance of personal grief over the loss of a family member this was tempered by an understanding in the inevitability of death. Grief, then, was not a long lasting personal trauma that overtook a person indefinitely, but rather was, at least in public, highly controlled and channelled into a ritualistic outpouring. Violent outbursts involving ripping at hair and clothing are a good demonstration of this. On the surface, they appear to be spontaneous acts of overwhelming grief, but they are actually a highly ritualised performative aspect of formal grieving and lamentation.<sup>48</sup> Grief performances focused on personal disadvantage and loss to the surviving relatives, rather than the deceased.<sup>49</sup> Personal grief can be separated from highly ritualised acts of grief and lamentation, which were considered to be owed to the dead as part of the γέρας θανόντων – the honour for the dead – and as Sourvinou-Inwood comments: ‘lament was one of the ways through which the deceased’s social personal was articulated and given value, and his importance stressed’.<sup>50</sup> As well as being highly disrespectful against the deceased’s surviving relatives, to leave the deceased without such praise and honour was also a grievous insult against the gods, who may then turn the deceased upon the living. When Odysseus speaks with the dead in the *Nekyia* of the *Odyssey*, Elpenor pleads with the hero that he should not be left ἄκλαυτον ἄθαπτον... μή τοί τι θεῶν μῆνιμα γένωμαι (‘unwept and unburied... I might become a source of the gods’ wrath for you’).<sup>51</sup> Lamentation, and public or personal grief, were traditionally connected to the *ekphora* phase of funerary rites, and this is where they were most publically expressed. However, lamentation began during the *prosthesis* phase, after appropriate sacrifices and offerings had been made to the deceased.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Stafford 2000: 6.

<sup>49</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1981: 24-25.

<sup>50</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 177. cf. 171, 175} See also Jones 2010: 103.

<sup>51</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.72-73.

<sup>52</sup> Stafford 2000: 6.

Grief could also be expressed though intentional physical defilement. This was not the same type of pollution that naturally surrounded the body of the deceased, but an outward representation that could help align the mourner with the deceased. In a literary example of this, upon learning of Patroklos' death, Achilles covers his face and hair with dirt, performing a physical act of his internal grief:

ἀμφοτέρησι δὲ χερσὶν ἐλὼν κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν  
χεύατο κακ' κεφαλῆς, χαρίεν δ' ἥσχυνε πρόσωπον·  
νεκταρέω δὲ χιτῶνι μέλαιν' ἀμφίζανε τέφρη.  
αὐτὸς δ' ἐν κονίῃσι μέγας μεγαλωστί τανυσθεὶς  
κεῖτο, φίλῃσι δὲ χερσὶ κόμην ἥσχυνε δαΐζων.

and with both hands he took the dark dust and poured it over his head and defiled his fair face, and on his fragrant tunic the black ashes fell. And he himself in the dust lay outstretched, mighty in his mightiness, and with his own hands he tore and marred his hair.<sup>53</sup>

And, he refuses to wash the marks and stains of fighting from his body until Patroklos' death was avenged and his funerary rituals were complete.<sup>54</sup> Achilles' initial self-defilement is not met with shock; self-pollution was an expected way of physically expressing emotional pain. Following Hektor's death, Priam similarly aligns himself with the state of his son's body when he κυλινδόμενος κατὰ κόπρον ('wallowed in the muck')<sup>55</sup> and when Iris delivers the gods' message to him, she finds him similarly defiled:

ἀμφὶ δὲ πολλὴ  
κόπρος ἔην κεφαλῇ τε καὶ αὐχένι τοῖο γέροντος  
τὴν ῥα κυλινδόμενος καταμήσατο χερσὶν ἐῆσι.

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<sup>53</sup> Hom. *Il.* 18.23-27. trans. Murray/Wyatt.

<sup>54</sup> Hom. *Il.* 23.44-46.

<sup>55</sup> Hom. *Il.* 22.414.



and on the old mans' head and neck was filth in abundance which he had gathered in his hands as he grovelled on the earth.<sup>56</sup>

Physical pollution was aimed at assimilating with the state of the deceased, particularly when that person has not yet undergone proper funerary rites and is, therefore, still in a transitory position between the worlds of the living and the dead. Guralnick asserts that 'dirtiness, which compromises a person's physical integrity, is a visible sign of the existential disorder affecting those who have lost someone close'.<sup>57</sup> In other words, it is nothing more than physical lamentation.

Achilleus' assimilation to Patroklos' state goes further than a simply physical representation of his grief. Bathing in dirt is symbolic of death on the battlefield, as the body is ground into the dirt, mud, and blood, and mutilated by the enemy forces. Achilleus' self-defilement begins the process of total integration between Achilleus and Patroklos' body which is completed when the hero enters battled and, refusing to wash, his body is stained with mud and blood. Integration between Achilleus and Patroklos is reinforced by Thetis and the Nerieds' lamentation, wherein they act as though they are grieving for Achilleus himself, appearing to confuse this death with Achilleus' own upcoming demise.<sup>58</sup> While this situation is certainly atypical of normal death-rites, his actions can tell us much about the funerary process. The first ritualised act of Patroklos' funeral occurs some time after Achilleus' initial outpouring of grief, and is manifested in a distinct way. The traditional elements of funerary ritual are undertaken. Feasting alongside Patroklos' body, the γέρας θάνατον, or ritual lament,<sup>59</sup> with the *ekphora* beginning Patroklos' separation from the world of the living as his body is removed from Achilleus' hut and moves toward the funerary ritual space. The elements of this funeral do not occur in the order that they would have historically occurred in, particularly holding

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<sup>56</sup> Hom. *Il.* 24.163-165. trans. Murray/Wyatt.

<sup>57</sup> Guralnick 1974: 64.

<sup>58</sup> cf. Patroklos' being mourned by Achilleus' mortal horses. Hom. *Il.* 17.426-428, 23.280-284.

<sup>59</sup> Hom. *Il.* 23.9.

the ritual banquet prior to burial. In one sense, this is done to facilitate Achilles' alignment to the dead Patroklos, as Achilles has refused to eat prior to the funerary banquet, but does so here because it is appropriate for the dead to eat. That is, because though alignment with Patroklos he has taken on the characteristics of being dead and can therefore only participate in the 'normal life' of the deceased. The Myrmidons are told not to lament Patroklos' death, to allow him to move swiftly into the Underworld, but by perverting and prolonging the necessarily funerary rites Achilles is himself keeping Patroklos in the mortal world longer than necessary – and Patroklos' appears in Achilles' dream and rebukes him for delaying burial. Following Patroklos' appearance in Achilles' dream, the hero finally conducts funerary rites for his friend. This episode highlights the importance of burial rites for the shade's passage into the Underworld, but also the duties of the remaining relatives – in this case Achilles – to put aside their private mourning and undertake proper funerary rites. Achilles cannot undertake this, and Patroklos appears in order to remind him.

The duties of the surviving relatives did not stop after the initial funerary rites had been properly conducted. They were also required to undertake regular visitation to the gravesite and, associated with this visitation was on-going ritual activity. Rites were not only conducted on the third, ninth and thirteenth days following death, but also included monthly and yearly visitation.<sup>60</sup> These visits included the offering of sacrificial meals and drinks made at the tomb, although liquid only offerings appear to be more frequent.<sup>61</sup> Decoration of the grave stele and the offering of gifts to the deceased are also common practice during these visits.<sup>62</sup> There is relatively little textual and archaeological evidence to indicate what these offerings may have consisted of; the vast majority of literary evidence describing funerary offerings of any kind present clearly atypical circumstances.

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<sup>60</sup> Garland 1985: 104; Kurtz and Boardman 1971: 147-48. For instances of these regular visitations occurring in contemporary literature see Soph. *El.* 277; Hdt. 4.26; Isok. 2.46; Plat. *Leg.* 717d-e.

<sup>61</sup> Vermeule 1979: 57-58.

<sup>62</sup> Garland 1985: 15-18, 110.

Orestes, for example, offers a lock of hair at the tomb of Agamemnon,<sup>63</sup> but dedication of hair is more likely to occur during funerary rituals, rather than afterwards.<sup>64</sup> Orestes, of course, had not been present at his father's funeral, and mentions this during his dedication. The farce of Alkestis' funeral makes it similarly unsuitable to take any clear evidence from; between the funeral that begins before death and the presence of Thanatos, to the Herakles' comic re-enactment of his labours, and Admetus and Pheres' argument overshadowing Alkestis' death. It is clear, however, that the *sema* is particularly important, and possibly more important than the actual remains of the deceased.<sup>65</sup> While this is certainly true in the case of ordinary citizen, there is sometimes an exception regarding the bodies, or more accurately bones, of local heroes lost or stolen to other places. The Delphic Oracle, for instance, instructed the Spartans to retrieve Orestes' bones in order to win war against the Tegeans.<sup>66</sup>

The on-going ritual activity may be likened to the establishment of privately administered cult, with the deceased acting as the hero who is tended to by his own nearest relatives. This reinforces the importance of maintaining close familial relationships.<sup>67</sup> Although there was a prevailing belief in the Underworld as a place of residence, it was also felt that the deceased had access to their own tombs and that the *sema* was not simply a monument for posterity but was, in Garland's words, 'a place to which the dead would come not only for material but for intellectual nourishment'.<sup>68</sup> There is a parallel between the relationship of the dead and his tomb and that of gods and heroes have with their own temples or shrines; a god

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<sup>63</sup> Aisch. *Ag.* 6-7.

<sup>64</sup> cf. to Achilles' dedication of a lock of hair at the funeral of Patroklos, Hom. *Il.* 23.144-146.

<sup>65</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 99, 120, 277.

<sup>66</sup> Hdt. 1.67. cf. Cartledge 2002: 119-20.

<sup>67</sup> Garland 1985: 120. For similar claims regarding the connection between the deceased hero and his tomb in hero-cults see B. C. Dietrich 1965: 34.

<sup>68</sup> Garland 1985: 119.

will support and protect those who inhabit the space surrounding his temple or a hero may be considered to play an instrumental role in a battle victory.<sup>69</sup>

It is clear that the Greeks expended a considerable amount of time, energy and money on the funerary rites themselves, and this may make it appear as though they had a greater consideration for the body, rather than the *psyche*, of the deceased. Without proper treatment of the body, including proper burial, it was believed that the deceased would not be permitted to enter the netherworld. In effect, maltreatment of the body was directly akin to maltreatment of the *psyche*. It was thought that the way the body was presented in funerary rituals might have also represented how the person appeared in the Underworld. This is where Vermeule's notion of the 'double' body in death is most helpful, with one body remaining at the grave and the other being sent into the Underworld. This also accounts for the simultaneous beliefs that the deceased resides permanently in the Underworld but is also never far away from their own tomb.<sup>70</sup> There was also an idea that the dead were granted certain 'powers', and a large part of this may have been a belief that would be able to locate one another in the Underworld. Although there is only a very small amount of evidence that reinforces this idea, it is likely that the concept would have been widely accepted as an aspect of the ordinary activities undertaken by the dead. Klytaimnestra, in the *Agamemnon*, implies that Iphigeneia would be there to greet her father upon his arrival in the Underworld,<sup>71</sup> and Antigone expresses her hope that her mother, father, and brother would be present to meet her upon her own death.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, Admetus implores Alkestis to wait for him in the Underworld once she has died.<sup>73</sup> More generally, Plato's Sokrates discusses the ability of the dead to come into contact with others who have

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<sup>69</sup> For a thorough example of this, involving the assistance given to the Athenians and Spartans at various times by Herakles, see Bowden 2005: 5-9.

<sup>70</sup> Vermeule 1979: 7-8. Vermeule later suggests that the Greeks could imagine a kind of tunnel between the tomb of the deceased and their *psyche*, wherever that might be; cf. 42.

<sup>71</sup> Aisch. *Ag.* 1555.

<sup>72</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 898-902.

<sup>73</sup> Eur. *Alk.* 363-364.

previously died.<sup>74</sup> It is most likely that beliefs like this came about as a way of comforting the living, specifically those who were nearing death due to age or illness. Knowing that one would be greeted in the Underworld by the familiar faces of loved ones who would be able to help them come to terms with their disembodiment and dislocation from living society would provide a greater level of comfort. Meanwhile, surviving relatives could entrust the newly dead to deliver messages to the previously deceased.<sup>75</sup>

While in the Underworld, the dead were free to participate in a number of activities that they enjoyed in life, including feasting and dining, sexual intercourse, and game playing, although Garland notes that 'the principle activities of the Homeric dead appear to be gossip, sententious moralising and self-indulgent regret'.<sup>76</sup> Grave offerings in the archaic and classical periods indicate burial with objects that could facilitate the comfort and happiness of the dead person. During the seventh and sixth centuries, board games were a particularly popular gift to the deceased, and these sometimes show images of mourning women on the corners of the board.<sup>77</sup> These games were usually made specifically for inclusion with burial gifts, and this may have invested 'the game board with some particular meaning for the chances and skill of life and death', as Morris and Papadopoulos comment.<sup>78</sup> Grave offerings could have also been items which belonged to the deceased in life and which they may want to keep in the afterlife, such as special weaponry.<sup>79</sup> We should not view grave goods as merely a show of wealth.<sup>80</sup> The lavishness of grave goods changed over time and they were more equally distributed in some periods than in others, and this was also changed in the classical period with funerary

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<sup>74</sup> Pl. *Ap.* 49.

<sup>75</sup> Vermeule 1979: 49.

<sup>76</sup> Garland 1985: 68.

<sup>77</sup> An example of this can be found in Whittaker 2004: 208, fig. 01.

<sup>78</sup> S. P. Morris and Papadopoulos 2004: 235-36; Vermeule 1979: 80. See also Garland 1985: 70. Garland disagrees with the suggestion that there is any kind of eschatological connection and contests that the board games appear in graves as an object of entertainment for the deceased in the afterlife.

<sup>79</sup> Vermeule 1979: 56.

<sup>80</sup> I. Morris 1992: 106.

legislation.<sup>81</sup> These graves goods should be viewed within the context of a wider ritual practice contemporary with specific burials.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> See Garland 1989.

<sup>82</sup> I. Morris 1992: 108. An interesting comment on the discovery and analysis of grave goods can be found in the fictional Macaulay 1979. Macaulay's story is set in the year 4022 where an amateur archaeologist, Howard Carson, working in what used to be the United States discovers a body entombed with a motel room. Carson catalogues what he sees, imagining it to be a ritualised burial – the television, for instance, which the body faces, is called 'the Great Altar', and the bed the deceased is found on 'the Ceremonial Platform'. This is discussed in the specific context of Athenian grave good in Morris' *Death-Ritual and Social Structure* says of this: '...grave goods also offer perfect ammunition for mockery of naïve direct interpretations. Macaulay's *Motel of the Mysteries* indulges this, with Howard Carson excavating the Toot'n'c'mon motel in the belief that it is a necropolis, seeing everything from a television to a toilet seat as ritual paraphernalia accompanying a corpse propped up in bed with his remote control. It is easy to laugh, but this kind of direct interpretation is the way grave goods are usually treated. And up to a point that makes sense... but, as I said, this only works up to a point. It is hard to forget the example of the 'Orphics', whose next life was distinctive, but whose grave good were conventional'. (104-105)

## Appendix 2: Instances of Chthonic-words in the Greek corpus, 8<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE

### Divinities

Reference	Text	Translation	Notes
Hes. <i>Th.</i> 767-770.	ἔνθα θεοῦ χθονίου πρόσθεν δόμοι ἠχήμεντες ἰφθίμου τ' Ἀΐδεω καὶ ἐπαινῆς Περσεφονείης ἑστᾶσιν	That is where, in front, stand the echoing houses of the earthly god, of powerful Hades and of dread Persephone	(trans. Most)
Hes. <i>Th.</i> 465.	εὐχεσθαι δὲ Διὶ χθονίῳ Δημήτερι θ' ἄγνῃ	pray to Zeus Chthonios and pure Demeter	
Hes. <i>Th.</i> 697.	Τιτῆνας χθονίους	Chthonic [earth-born] Titans	cf. provenance
Aisch. <i>Cho.</i> 1.	Ἑρμῇ χθόνιε, πατρῷ ἐποπτεύων κράτη	Hermes Chthonios, you who watch over your father's powers	Speaker: Orestes. Hermes is invoked by Orestes both in connection to his Underworld provenance (cf. Hermes' psychopompic role) and in for his relationship to Zeus, divine administrator of justice.
Aisch. <i>Cho.</i> 124b.	ἄρηξον, Ἑρμῇ χθόνιε	Aid me, Hermes Chthonios	Speaker: Elektra
Aisch. <i>Pers.</i> 628.	χθόνιοι δαίμονες ἄγνοί, Γῇ τε καὶ Ἑρμῇ, βασιλεῦ τ' ἐνέρων	Holy chthonic gods, Ge and Hermes, and King of those below	Speaker: Chorus
Aisch. <i>Supp.</i> 24-25.	ὑπατοὶ τε θεοί, καὶ βαρύτιμοι χθόνιοι θήκας κατέχοντες	Gods above and vengeful chthonic gods who dwell in the tomb	Speaker: Chorus
Aisch. <i>Cho.</i> 476.	μάκαρες χθόνιοι	Blessed chthonic [gods/powers]	Speaker: Chorus. Context: supplication
Aisch. <i>fr.</i> 273a. 8-10. (Sommerstein)	Χθόνα δ' ὠγυγίαν ἐπικεκλόμενος χθονιόν θ' Ἑρμῆν πομπὸν φθιμένων. [αἰ]τοῦ χθόνιον Δία νυκτιπόλων ἑσμὸν ἀνείναι ποταμοῦ στομάτων	Call upon the age-old Earth And Hermes of the Underworld, escort of the departed, And ask the Zeus of the Underworld to send up the swarn [of souls] from	Speaker: Chorus From <i>Psychagogoi</i> (‘Ghost-Raisers’), which dramatised the Homeric <i>Nekyia</i> . cf. Sommerstein 2008: 268. (trans. Sommerstein)

		the nigh-shrouded mouth of mouth of the river	
Aisch. <i>Cho.</i> 727.	χθόνιον δ' Ἑρμῆν	Hermes of the Underworld	Speaker: Chorus
Aisch. <i>Pers.</i> 640- 642.	Γὰ τε καὶ ἄλλοι χθονίων ... δαίμονα	Ge and [you] other chthonic gods	Speaker: Chorus
Aisch. <i>Ag.</i> 88-91.	πάντων δὲ θεῶν τῶν ἀστυνόμων, ὑπάτων, χθονίων, τῶν τ' οὐρανίων τῶν τ' ἀγοραίων, βωμοὶ δώροισι φλέγονται:	The altars of all the city's protecting gods, The gods above and the chthonic gods, the gods of the doors and the gods of the assembly- place, are ablaze with gifts.	Speaker: Chorus (trans. Sommerstein, with amendments)
Aisch. <i>Cho.</i> 354- 359.	φίλος φίλοισι τοῖς ἐκεῖ καλῶς θανοῦσιν κατὰ χθονὸς ἐμπρέπων σεμνότιμος ἀνάκτωρ, πρόπολός τε τῶν μεγίστων χθονίων ἐκεῖ τυράννων	Cherishing and cherished by those who died nobly there, Prominent among them beneath the earth As a ruler honoured and revered, And an attendant of the greatest Underworld lords in that realm.	Speaker: Chorus. cf. The Dead/Deceased Heroes. (trans. Sommerstein)
Aisch. <i>Cho.</i> 399.	κλῦτε δὲ Γᾶ χθονίων τε τιμαί	Hear me, Earth and honoured chthonians.	Speaker: Elektra. Context: supplication.
Eur. <i>IT.</i> 1272- 1273.	Πυθίων δόμων χθονίαν ἀφελεῖν μῆ- νιν θεᾶς	Begging him to free the Pythian temple from the wrath of the goddess Earth.	Speaker: Chorus. Context: Apollo (strangling) Pytho to (re-)gain control of Delphi. (trans. Kovacs)
Eur. <i>fr.</i> 868 (Collard and Cropp)	...θεοὶ χθονιοὶ ζοφεράν ἀδιάυλον ἔχοντες ἔδραν φθειρομένων, Ἀχεροντίαν λίμνην...	...chthonic gods, possessing the murky abode of the dead from which none return, the marsh of Acheron...	(trans. Collard and Cropp, with amendments)
Eur. <i>Hek.</i> 78.	ὦ χθόνιοι θεοί	O, Chthonic gods	
Eur. <i>Pho.</i> 1320- 1321.	οἷς γὰρ θανοῦσι χρή τὸν οὐ τεθνηκότα τιμὰς διδόντα χθόνιον εὐσεβεῖν θεόν.	For the living must honour the dead and reverence the god of the Underworld.	Speaker: Kreon (trans. Kovacs)
Eur. <i>Alk.</i> 744- 745.	πρόφρων σε χθονιός θ' Ἑρμῆς Ἄιδης τε δέχοιτ'.	May Hermes Chthonios and Hades receive you kindly!	Speaker: Chorus leader (bidding farewell to Alkestis)
Soph. <i>El.</i> 110-112.	ὦ δῶμ' Ἀΐδου καὶ Περσεφόνης,	O House of Hades and Persephone! O Hermes	Speaker: Elektra



	ὦ χθόνι' Ἑρμῇ καὶ πότνι' Ἄρᾳ σεμναί τε θεῶν παῖδες Ἑρινύες,	chthonios! O potent Curse, and you fearsome daughters of the gods, and Erinyes	
Soph. OC. 1568.	ὦ χθόνιαί θεαὶ	O Chthonic Goddess	Speaker: Chorus
Soph. Aj. 832.	πομπαῖον Ἑρμῆν χθόνιον	Hermes, Underworld guide	Speaker: Aias
Soph. OC.n 1606.	κτύπησε μὲν Ζεὺς χθόνιος	Zeus Chthonios sent forth his thunder.	Speaker: Messenger. Context: the death of Oidipous. Thundering indicates that this is not Zeus Chthonios as Hades, but rather as an agrarian Zeus.
Hdt. 6.134.1.	Τιμοῦν, εἶναι δὲ ὑποζάκορον τῶν χθονίων θεῶν	Timo, an under-priestess of the chthonic goddesses	This refer to Demeter and Persephone. In 6.134.2. there is a mention of Demeter Thesmophoros.
Hdt. 7.153.2.	τῶν χθονίων θεῶν	The chthonic goddesses	(Sicily) Referring to Demeter and Persephone
Aristoph. Th. 101-103.	ἱερὰν χθονίαις δεξάμεναι λαμπάδα κοῦραι ξὺν ἐλευθέρᾳ πατρίδι χορεύσασθε βοάν.	Maidesn, take up the holy torch of the Neither Twain, and with country freed, dance a loud cry!	Speaker: Agathon. (trans. Henderson)
Aristoph. Fr. 1126.	Ἑρμῇ χθόνιε	Hermes Chthonios	Speaker: Aischylos Context: recitation of the opening lines of Aischylos' <i>Choephoroi</i> (see Aisch. <i>Cho.</i> 1 entry above; cf. Aristoph. <i>Fr.</i> 1138 entry below).
Aristoph. Fr. 1138.	Ἑρμῇ χθόνιε	Hermes Chthonios	Speaker: Aischylos. Context: recitation of the opening lines of Aischylos' <i>Choephoroi</i> (see Aisch. <i>Cho.</i> 1 entry above; cf. Aristoph. <i>Fr.</i> 1126 entry above).
Aristoph. Fr. 1145.	Ἑρμῆν χθόνιον	Hermes Chthonios	Speaker: Dionysos

### The Dead (including deceased heroes)

Reference	Text	Translation	Notes
Pind. <i>Pyth.</i> 4.159.	δύνασαι δ' ἀφελεῖν μᾶνιν χθονίων	You can relieve the wrath of the dead	Context: worship of deceased heroes

### Monsters/Beasts

Reference	Text	Translation	Notes
Aisch. <i>Sev.</i> 521-525.	πέποιθα δὴ τὸν Διὸς ἀντίτυπον ἔχοντ' ἄφιλον ἐν σάκει τοῦ χθονίου δέμας δαίμονος, ἐχθρόν εἴκασμα βροτοῖς τε καὶ δαροβίοισι θεοῖσιν, πρόσθε πυλᾶν κεφαλὰν ἰάψειν.	I am confident that he who has on his shield The adversary of Zeus, the unlovely form of an earth-born Divinity, an image hateful to mortals And to the long-lived gods, Will lose his head before the gates!	Speaker: Chorus cf. provenience (trans. Sommerstein)
<i>Sud.</i> X 326 (iv 808 Alder)/ <i>Alkman fr.</i> 146 (Campbell)	χθονία... καὶ παρ' Ἀλκμᾶνι δέ, ὅτε φησὶ χθόνιον τέρας ἐπὶ τῆς Ἑρίδος, τινὲς ἀντὶ τοῦ συγνόν ἐδέξαντο, ἔνιοι δὲ ἀντὶ τοῦ μέγα· ἐπεὶ πρὸς αὐτὴν λέγει.	In Alkman, when he says Strife infernal monster, some have taken it to mean 'loathsome', while others take it in the sense of 'great', since he is addressing Strife.	(trans. Campbell)
<i>Eur. Ion.</i> 1053-1054.	χθονίας Γοργοῦς	Chthonic [earth-born] Gorgo	Speaker. Chorus. cf. provenance
<i>Eur. IT.</i> 1245-1247.	ὄθι ποικιλόνωτος οἴνωπὸς δράκων, σκιεῖρ᾽ ἀκάτεχ' ἄλσος εὐφυλλον δάφνα, γᾶς πελώριον τέρας, ἄμφεπε <τε> χθόνιον <ἔδραν>.	There a dark-visaged dragon with speckled back Held in thrall the rich laurel-shaded grove – a monstrous portent brought forth by Earth – and ranged the oracular shrine.	Speaker: Chorus. cf. provenience (trans. Kovacs)
<i>Eur. fr.</i> 939 (Collard and Cropp)	ὦ παγκάκιστοι, χθόνια γῆς παιδεύματα	You total villains, earthbound offspring of earth!	(trans. Collard and Cropp)

### Divine activity/Sacred activity

Reference	Text	Translation	Notes
Hes. <i>fr.</i> 259 (Most) = <i>Epim.</i> <i>Hom. ε</i> 104 Dyck	δῶρα θεῶν μακάρων πλήσθαι χθονί	the gifts of the blessed gods came near to the ground.	(trans. Most)
<i>Alkman, fr.</i> 146.	χθόνιον τέρας	earthy portents/chthonic monster	

## Noise

Reference	Text	Translation	Notes
Aisch. <i>PB.</i> 994.	βροντήμασι χθονίοις κυκάτω πάντα καὶ ταρασσέτω	Thunders rumbling beneath the earth	Speaker: Prometheus. Regarding, Zeus' thunder.
Eur. <i>Hel.</i> 1346.	αὐδὸν χθονίαν	Earthy voice	Speaker: Chorus. Context: Kypris (Aphrodite) takes up earthy song and the drum.
Eur. <i>Hip.</i> 1201.	ἡχὼ χθόνιος ὡς βροντὴ Διὸς	A great noise in the earth, of Zeus' thunder.	Speaker: Messenger
Soph. <i>El.</i> 1066.	ὦ χθονία βροτοῖσι φάμα	O voice of the Underworld, reaching mortal men.	Speaker: Chorus. cf. geographic location.

## Geographic location

Reference	Text	Translation	Notes
Hes. <i>CW.</i> 120 = P.Oxy 1359 fr. 4. (Most)	Ἀμύ]κλας.[ Λαπί]θαο θυγάτ[ρα ]χθονίοιο[	] Amyclas [ Lapithes' ] daughter ] of the earthy [	
Pind. <i>Pyth.</i> 5.101.	ἀκούοντί που χθονίᾳ φρενί	and somehow below the earth they hear	Ancestral kings of Kyrene hear victory songs sung for Arkesilas from the Underworld.
Eur. <i>Alk.</i> 900- 902.	δύο δ' ἄντι μιᾶς Ἄιδης ψυχᾶς τὰς πιστοτάτας σὺν ἄν ἔσχεν, ὁμοῦ χθονίαν λίμνην διαβάντε.	Hades would have had two most faithful souls instead of one, crossing the chthonian lake together.	Speaker: Admetos. (trans. Kovacs, with amendments)
Eur. <i>Alk.</i> 234- 237.	βόασον ὦ στέναξον ὦ Φεραία χθών, τὰν ἀρίσταν <πασᾶν> γυναιῖκα μαραινομένην νόσω κατὰ γᾶς χθόνιον παρ' Ἄιδαν.	Cry aloud, o land of Pherae, weep for the nobles of all wives wasting away to Hades with fatal sickness.	Speaker: Sub- chorus B (trans. Kovacs)
Eur. <i>Ion.</i> 1441- 1442.	ὄν κατὰ γᾶς ἐνέρων χθόνιον μετὰ Περσεφόνας τ' ἐδόκουν ναίειν.	[a child] I thought dwelt below with the shades and with Persephone!	Speaker: Kreousa, to Ion, during <i>anagnorisis</i> (recognition) (trans. Kovacs)
Soph. <i>El.</i> 1066.	ὦ χθονία βροτοῖσι φάμα	O voice of the Underworld, traveling to mortal men.	Speaker: Chorus. cf. noise
Soph. <i>OC.</i> 1751-1753.	παύετε θρήνων, παῖδες: ἐν οἷς γὰρ	Cease your lamentation, girls! One should not	Speaker: Theseus (trans. Lloyd-Jones)

	χάρις ἢ χθονία ξύν ’ ἀπόκειται, πενθεῖν οὐ χρή: νέμεσις γάρ.	mourn for those for whom they darkness below the earth is a treasure graciously bestowed; the gods would resent it!	
Soph. OC. 1726.	τὰν χθόνιον ἐστὶαν ἰδεῖν	To see the Underworld hearth.	Speaker: Antigone
Aristoph. Fr. 1148.	εἰ γὰρ πατρῶον τὸ χθόνιον ἔχει γέρας	Because if he possessed the Underworld as a paternal inheritance –	Speaker: Euripides (trans. Henderson)

### Katabasis

Reference	Text	Translation	Notes
Eur. Her. 615.	Χθονίας νιν ἄλσος Ἑρμιῶν τ’ ἔχει πόλις.	The grove of the chthonian goddess and the city of Hermione have him now.	Speaker: Herakles. Context: Herakles and Amphitryon are talking about Herakles’ katabasis and retrieval of Kerberos
Eur. And. 543- 544.	ἧς ἀπολαύων Ἄιδην χθόνιον καταβήσῃ.	It is the benefit you derive from her that you now go down to the Underworld.	Speaker: Menelaos

### Agrarian

Reference	Text	Translation	Notes
Pind. Pyth. 4.43.	εἰ γὰρ οἴκοι νιν βάλε παρ χθόνιον Ἄϊδα στόμα	For if [Euphamos] cast the seed down at the earth’s entrance to Hades.	(trans. Race, with admendments)

### Provenance

Reference	Text	Translation	Notes
Aisch. fr. 489c (Sommerstein) = adesp. 375.	ἀλλὰ’ εἴ σ’ ἔνυπνον φάντασμα φοβεῖ χθονίας θ’ Ἑκάτης κῶμον ἐδέξω	But if you are terrified by a vision seen in sleep and have been visited by the revel-band of Hekate from the Underworld.	Sommerstein considers this as belonging to a group of fragments which appear in the <i>TrGF</i> under the <i>Adespota</i> , but there is evidence that Aischylos is the author. (trans. Sommerstein)
Soph. Aj. 202.	γενεᾶς χθονίων ἀπ’ Ἑρεχθειδῶν	From the race of the sons of Erechtheus sprung from the earth	Speaker: Tekmessa (trans. Lloyd- Jones)

Eur. <i>Bak.</i> 537-541.	[οἶαν οἶαν ὀργάν] ἀναφαίνει χθόνιον γένος ἐκφύς τε δράκοντός ποτε Πενθεύς, ὃν Ἐχίων ἐφύτευσε χθόνιος,	[What anger] He shows his earthborn origin, that he was born from a dragon, does Pentheus, son of earthborn Echion.	Speaker: Chorus. Context: Echion is one of five surviving Spartae (literally, 'sown- men') that grew from the dragon's teeth planted by Kadmos. 'Earth- born'.
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## Appendix 3: Ritual and Narrative Rites-of-Passage

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Speaking of rites-of-passage in ancient Greece is problematic, both in terms of historical transition rites and in mythic narratives of transition. This is both because there is no scholarly consensus of what constitutes transitory or 'initiation' rites, and due to the disparate natures of rituals and narratives that are conventionally labelled as rites-of-passage. The term 'initiation' tends to be used to refer to two broad categories of activity:<sup>1</sup> mystery cult initiations and rites-of-passage, which involve mainly practices that relate to coming-of-age. What makes the study of rites-of-passage more troublesome than mystery initiations is the lack of Greek vocabulary that relates to them. All the Greek words that are associated with 'initiation' are connected with mystery cults, with no vocabulary referring specifically to overarching categories of age- or status-related transitions.<sup>2</sup> There are various regional vocabularies that exist to cover the disparate and society-specific rites, such as the Spartan *krypteia* and the Athenian *ephēbia* and *arkteia*. It is, therefore, not problematic that there is no strict panhellenic vocabulary for this type of ritual initiation. This, though, raises the question of which rites, or which types of rites, should be included within the category of 'rites-of-passage'. For example, there are vast differences in practice and content between Spartan and Athenian age-related 'rites-of-passage' and these cannot be linked together in any anthropological or phenomenological way even though they represent the same transitory period for young men and women, within the context of their own society.<sup>3</sup> As such, the only appropriate definition must be broad and encompassing, yet still specific enough

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<sup>1</sup> For a general introduction to the background of scholarship on initiation, and a definition of 'initiation' see Calame 1999: 278-307; Graf 2003; Lincoln 2003: 241-54; Padilla 1999: 15-21.

<sup>2</sup> Graf 2003: 9.

<sup>3</sup> There are some such initiatory rites that can cast light onto similar rites in other locations; for example, Vidal-Naquet's work on the 'Black Hunter' narrative, which he associates with the Athenian *ephebeia* can also be applied to the Spartan *krypteia*. See Ma 2008; Vidal-Naquet 1986: 106-28.

to warrant exclusion of rites that do not fall into the category of transitional. Rites-of-passage must be defined as those rites that culminate in a change of social or religious status that could not have otherwise occurred. This argument for what defines a rite-of-passage echoes Parker's assertion that 'a rite that does not bring a change in status is not an initiation'.<sup>4</sup>

The theme that brings these disparate initiatory activities together is that they all represent crossing from one stage of life into another, or from one social, civic, or religious status into a new or different stage or status. These include rites such as birth ceremonies, coming-of-age rituals, mystery cult initiations, weddings, and funerals. These rituals can all be read as having three common and distinct stages: rites of separations, transition rites, and rites of incorporation.<sup>5</sup> The first stage of this schema represents the preparatory or pre-liminal stage in which the subject readies themselves for their withdrawal from society. The second stage represents the liminal or transitory stage in which the actual metamorphose of status occurs. This is a journey through a literal or figurative otherworld during which the candidate for initiation sheds the skin of their old life and produces, from within, the coverings befitting their new station. Finally, the initiate is ready for reaggregation rites, which introduce them back into society with their new status. The schema may appear oversimplified but the employment of a simple, yet very specific, schema is advantageous in this situation, wherein the myths and rituals that represent transition are, themselves, so complex and different from one another. Through the employment of such a schema, we can bring wide-ranging disparate rites together even though there is no common, overarching vocabulary that describes them – these rites clearly still belong to a collection that is concerned with the crossing of status-boundaries. We must be wary, though, of placing too much emphasis on the coherence of these types of rites. While it may be useful to deduce their common semiotic components it is not useful to 'lump them all together' as

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<sup>4</sup> Parker 2005b: 210.

<sup>5</sup> van Gennep 1960: 11.

one kind of rite. The reason we might undertake an activity like this is to both identify the type of ritual activity that we are dealing with and to begin to understand what that rite might entail so, as we look deeper, we can identify local nuance. One prominent and easily accessible example is the transitory processes undertaken from maiden, to fiancée, to wife. This transition was discussed in the context of the analysis of death-related imagery in chapter four.

The young maiden leaves her family, with whom she has belonged as a girl. The embarkation of her journey represents the act of separation. She then enters an in-between period of ritual liminality, which occurs during the marriage rites themselves and the journey from her father's *oikos* to that of her new husband. Finally, she re-enters society with a different role and status, and she is accepted as a wife and a member of the new household. Classical Athenian wedding customs reflect this schema, as they were undertaken in three parts, each of which directly corresponds to one of these phases. The first stage is the ἔγγυή, or betrothal of a virgin girl by her father. This stage is the metaphorical separation of the girl from her former life, and although she does not formally leave her family home during this stage of the process, it signals that she is on the cusp of becoming a disparate entity. The second stage is ἔκδοσις, wherein the girl transfers from her father's house to that of her new husband. The travel between houses represents the liminal period of transition; she leaves her father's home as a girl and enters her new husband's home as a wife, and this intermediary period is a physical representation of the metaphysical change occurring in her status. Finally, the γάμος occurs. This is the actual wedding ceremony, which includes consummation of the marriage on the night of the wedding; this represents the girl's acceptance of her new role and of her reincorporation into society.<sup>6</sup> In this final stage, change is characterised by a private physical change in condition when the girl transforms from virgin to woman.

In mythic rites-of-passage, death is as an image for the intermediary liminal period. This is sometimes represented as a physical death, as in the case of

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<sup>6</sup> Beaulieu 2008: 42.



Iphigeneia, which will be discussed briefly below. More usually, however, this is only a metaphorical death. The protagonist's death is sometimes narrated alone, but death is often accompanied with rebirth. By looking closely at the mythic rite-of-passage narrative of Iphigenia, and relating it to the wedding as an actual rite-of-passage, examined above, we can see that there are not only direct correlations between these, but that both ritual narratives fit into the tripartite schema.

Fritz Graf identifies three categories of initiation myths, and these categories can also be used for rites-of-passage more generally. The first group includes myths that are aetiological for rites which are contemporary to their emergence, and that remain transitional in the accounts we have of them:

The first subgroup seems rather straightforward since the rite that goes together with the myth has a clear initiatory function in the society that tells the myth. But there are not many myths that can make this claim... A case in point is the myth of the girl Leukippe whom Leto transformed into the young man Leukippos. It is the etiological story for a festival in the cult of Leto at Phaistos on Crete, the Ekdysia, and a ritual performed during the wedding night in the same sanctuary... The mythic theme of gender change, furthermore, belongs to adolescent male ideology connected with [initiation] rites. Thus, there is enough circumstantial evidence to allow the conclusion that in the story of Leukippos we deal with an initiation myth.<sup>7</sup>

Although we don't know much about this festival, it is connected to ritual nudity and undressing, as the name 'Festival of Undressing' suggests. The myths in this subgroup correspond clearly with the rituals that they are associated with. The second subgroup includes myths that correspond to rituals that are transitional in character but which have been transformed into something else. In this group, methodological problems arise when attempting a reading of a non-transitional myth as an aetiology for a transitional ritual.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Graf 2003: 15-16.

<sup>8</sup> Graf 2003: 16.

This second subgroup is trickier to deal with: methodologically we could come close to a circular reading when explaining a non-initiatory ritual as a later transformation of an initiation rite by using its etiological myth. A good example is the case of the Locrian maidens.<sup>9</sup>

Each year the Lokrian sent two maidens to the temple of Athena Ilias at Troy. This was done in recompense to the goddess because Lokrian Aias had raped Cassandra within her temple. The goddess drowned Aias and cursed his descendants with plague, which, by decree of the Delphic Oracle, could be averted by the dedication of two adolescent girls from leading Lokrian families:

In its actual function, the rite certainly is no initiation rite; the task of these two girls has nothing to do with the general coming of age of Locrian girls, nor presumably with their own. Neither does the myth talk about initiation rites and the coming of age of the Locrian girls. It talks about a purification or atonement rite and focuses on the fears of the girls... At the same time, it gave the Locrians a ritual means of counteracting the infamous image of their ancestor Ajax has in Homeric mythology. I still think that the cluster of motifs in both the myth and the ritual point to an initiatory prehistory; but this tells us virtually nothing about the function of the ritual in Hellenistic times.<sup>10</sup>

The third category includes myths which do not directly correspond to transitory ritual in antiquity but which scholars read as having transitory characteristics, and whose transitory background belongs to the prehistory of each specific myth.<sup>11</sup> The third group is the most challenging to analyse, and Graf identifies two examples of such myths. These are Theseus' journey to Krete,<sup>12</sup> and the sacrifice of Iphigeneia at Aulis.

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<sup>9</sup> Graf 2003: 16.

<sup>10</sup> Graf 2003: 16.

<sup>11</sup> Graf 2003: 16-17.

<sup>12</sup> The myth of Theseus, legendary Athenian hero and king, illustrates the motif of transitional myths. In regards to specifically Athenian mythology, Theseus is the arch-ephebe – the paradigm that all Athenian youths follow. 'The myth of Theseus is a case in point. In a fragmentary second century BC inscription, Theseus' exploits during the Cretan expedition as well as those during his return from Troezen were compared to the ephebic education: as an ephebe, Theseus is a paradigm of the ephebes who imitate him'. (Graf 2003: 18.; cf. IG II<sup>2</sup> 2291a) As a dolphin-rider, Theseus' descent into

In this narrative, Iphigeneia, a young Argive princess and daughter of Agamemnon and Klytaimestra, travels from Argos to Aulis on the promise of marriage. In reality, her father has been commanded by Artemis to sacrifice the young virgin in exchange for agreeable winds for the combined Greek armies, under his command, to sail to Troy for war. Eventually, Iphigeneia is sacrificed and the Greeks depart. Euripides' version of the myth, told in *Iphigenia Taurica*, sees Artemis exchange Iphigeneia for a deer at the moment of her death;<sup>13</sup> however, other treatments of the narrative – such as Aischylos' mention in the *Oresteia*<sup>14</sup> – do not

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the sea was a symbolic death and rebirth and it is well attested by the fifth century. Bakchylides relates the story of the young Theseus, sailing to Krete and defending the maiden Eriboia against the unwelcome advances of Kretan King Minos. In a show of force, Minos called out to his father, Zeus, who responded by illuminating the sky with lightening. Minos then issued the challenge to the young hero:

Θησεῦ, σὺ τάδε  
 μὲν βλέπεις σαφῇ Διὸς  
 δῶρα· σὺ δ' ὄρνυ' ἐς βα-  
 ρύβρομον πέλαγος· Κρονίδας  
 δέ τοι πατήρ ἄναξ τελεῖ  
 Ποσειδᾶν ὑπέρτατον  
 κλέος χθόνα κατ' ἡϋδενδρον.

Theseus: you see my clear gift from Zeus. Now you must leap into the loud-roaring sea. And lord Poseidon, Kronos' son and your father, will give you supreme glory over the forested earth. (Bakchyl. 17.75-80.)

Once so challenged, Theseus dove into the sea with unwavering conviction, distressing his Athenian companions who began to cry out for their hero. Almost as soon as the young hero is in the water, dolphins arrive to carry him safely to his father Poseidon's underwater palace, where he is adorned with gifts. Finally, Theseus emerges from the sea and appears at the ship's side, completely dry and adorned in the finery he had been given under water, much to the astonishment of Minos and his fellow sailors. Thus, Poseidon is proved to be Theseus's father.

<sup>13</sup> Eur. *IT*. 28-31.

<sup>14</sup> Though Iphigeneia's sacrifice is a well-known component of this myth, especially from Euripides' later treatment of it, Aischylos says little of it directly. He wrote an earlier play called *Iphigenia* that likely dealt with this portion of the myth, but it is totally lost except for one small fragment. The mythic story is, however, it is indirectly referred to throughout the *Oresteia*, and the *Agamemnon* alludes directly to this myth. The chorus of Argive elders remember the prescription that Kalchas delivered to the king and Agamemnon's deliberation over whether to sacrifice his daughter to the goddess. Finally, they comment that ἔτλα δ' οὖν θυτὴρ γενέσθαι θυγατρός ('he brought himself to become the sacrificer of his daughter'). (Aisch. *Ag*. 224-225.) After slaying her husband, Klytaimestra refers to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia a number of times, calling herself δικαίᾱς τέκτονος ('an artificer of justice'). (Aisch. *Ag*. 1406) During interrogation from the Argive elders for her murder of Agamemnon she says, μὰ τὴν τέλειον τῆς ἐμῆς παιδὸς Δίκην, Ἄτην Ἑρινὺν θ', αἰσι τόνδ' ἔσφαξ' ἐγώ ('by the fulfilled Justice that was due for my child, by Ate and by the Erinyes, through

mention this exchange.<sup>15</sup> Agamemnon's false promise of marriage for his daughter corresponds to the first stage of the schema, during which the young girl's betrothal signifies the beginning of separation from her family. Although Iphigeneia is unaware that her betrothal is not to a suitor, but to death itself, she readies herself for marriage and begins to undertake the process of becoming a wife. The transitory state occurs during her journey from her home in Argos to the Greek camp in Aulis. This takes the place of the young maiden travelling from her father's house to her new husband's house. In both the historical and the mythic examples, the physical journey signifies not only a metaphysical alteration, but this physical journey is the origin of the metaphysical one.<sup>16</sup> During this time – whether it is the short journey across the *polis* undertaken by the young Athenian girl or a longer trip across the country as undertaken by Iphigeneia – the maiden begins her mental preparation for the deeply personal change she is about to undergo. This includes not only a change of duties and status within the community, but the personal physical experience of this transitory process. For the young girl this is signalled by the loss of her virginity, but for Iphigeneia it means the loss of her life. Rather than experiencing reintegration, Iphigeneia becomes a 'bride of death'<sup>17</sup> and transforms ritualistically, rather than re-entering society like the young girl following her wedding rites and the consummation of her marriage. This represents the motif of death, albeit missing the corresponding element of rebirth, which many mythic rites-of-passage show. This has been discussed in detail throughout this thesis.<sup>18</sup>

The narrative of Iphigeneia provides an example of a transitory myth that presents a subversion of the historical religious sequence of the corresponding

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whose aid I slew this man'). (Aisch. *Ag.* 1432-1433.) Later, Orestes and Elektra both comment directly on, and indirectly allude to the sacrifice of their sister, but either neither of them understand or neither acknowledge that it has provided the catalyst for Agamemnon's death.

<sup>15</sup> For other treatments of the Iphigeneia narrative see Dowden 1989: 17. For an analysis of the origin of Euripides' Iphigeneia narrative see Hulton 1962: 364-68.

<sup>16</sup> Øistein Endsjø 2002: 236; van Gennep 1960: 22.

<sup>17</sup> Loraux 1987: 38-39, 42-47. See chapter four for a fuller discussion of Brides of Hades/Brides of Death and their relationship with Underworld iconography.

<sup>18</sup> Specifically in chapter four for female rites-of-passage.

status-altering event. Though her narrative is normally read as a myth of initiation, it is not explicitly so, nor does it overtly depict a transitory ritual. One of the key points to highlight for this third subcategory of myths is the experience of marginalisation. We must be careful, though, to recognise that, as Meyer comments, 'there is nothing necessarily liberatory anti-structural, or communitarian about the stage of the ritual process. Asymmetries of power and status do not evaporate in the liminal period. Rather... a condition of the *communitas* experienced among novices is the absolute authority elders exercise over them'.<sup>19</sup> It is also important to remember that, as Redfield observes, 'initiator experience is not derived from ritual; rather the ritual is derived from the experience, which it aims to clarify, motivate, normalise, support and explain'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Meyer 1987. The term '*communitas*', coined by Victor Turner, denotes the liminal period of transition. This is a period in which the candidate is not only able to learn and grow, but it also serves as a safe haven from considerations of status: it is a place and time during which the candidate can experience intimacy, egalitarianism, spontaneity and humane authenticity, without the trappings of a fixed status.

<sup>20</sup> Redfield 2003b: 257.

## Appendix 4: The Nekyomanteia, An Example of Chthonic Ritual?

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The Nekyomanteia demonstrate an avenue of religious dedication to Underworld divinities, and can show us an example of so-called 'chthonic' worship. These were considered to be direct entrances to the Underworld, and were used as oracles of the dead, where the living could go and communicate with the dead. There are four major oracles of the dead in the Greek world: at the Acheron in Thesprotia, Avernus in Campania, Heracleia Pontica on the southern Black Sea coast, and Tainaron on the tip of the Mani peninsula.<sup>1</sup> The most probable method of consultation at these oracles is through oneiromancy, with consultants spending a night in the nekylomanteia in order to encounter ghosts in their dreams.<sup>2</sup> There is some evidence that during necromantic rites a pit was dug out around the hearth-fire as a form of reversed altar to the Underworld gods.<sup>3</sup> If we consider that this practice might also occur in all, or at least some of other types of cultic worship to so-called chthonic divinities, it accounts for the absence of permanent, established altars dedicated to these gods. As offerings to ouranic deities were focused upwards, with the main offerings being burnt and the smoke rising to the gods, it makes sense that offerings given to the Underworld gods should be directed downwards, with the main offerings being poured into the earth.<sup>4</sup> One literary example of this occurs in book eleven of Homer's *Odyssey*, where Odysseus digs a pit with his sword to pour libations to the dead, consisting of milk, honey, sweet-wine, water, barley meal and, finally, blood.<sup>5</sup> In this case, we can see that an inversion of the altar on which cultic offerings were placed would aid in the delivery

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<sup>1</sup> Caskey and Dakaris 1962: 85; Ogden 2001: 17; Ustinova 2009: 69-81.

<sup>2</sup> Paus. 9.39.6-13; see also Ogden 2001: 18-19.

<sup>3</sup> Heli. 6.14; Stat. *Theb.* 4.451-452; Ap. Rho. 3.1034; cf. Ogden 2001: 168.

<sup>4</sup> For types of altars connected with 'chthonian' and Olympic sacrifices, and Olympic sacrifices being partially burnt and so-called 'chthonic' sacrifices being wholly burnt, see van Straten 1995: 166.

<sup>5</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.25-29, 31; 10.517-520.

of the offerings, which are now flowing in the appropriate direction. We may find a better-established parallel for this in the practice in the supplication of Hittite Underworld divinities. The Hittite gods who were directly death or Underworld-related, like those in Greece, generally had no established cults and were only supplicated to in response to specific problems or situation and so the lack of permanent altars is not be troublesome. Therefore, temporary, downward-facing altars were made by digging a pit in the earth, sometimes along a riverbank, as we find in the *Odyssey*.<sup>6</sup> There is also evidence that these pits were sometimes dug with daggers, as – again – we find in the *Odyssey*.<sup>7</sup> These ritual actions, if they can be true of chthonic worship in Greece, are not the only circumstance in which we find a kind of inversion of the offerings of ouranic deities being offered to chthonic deities.

There is some indication of a connection between the ritual undertaken by Odysseus in *Odyssey* eleven and actual necromantic rites.<sup>8</sup> There is some suggestion that the Odyssean episode is based on religious ritual, rather than strictly following contemporary mythic conventions of *katabasis*. *Katabasis* myths do not include necromantic episodes, or any type of realistic religious ritual. They involve a direct descent into the Underworld, usually without the shades of the dead being used as intermediaries. That Odysseus begins in the mortal world, and that the shades rush to greet him, rather than the other way around, demonstrates that this episode is a necromantic rite, rather than a descent into the Underworld. Odysseus' 'descent' is easily explained by the same mimicked *katabasis* in necromantic rites, which often involves an imagined *katabasis* at the necromantic cave.<sup>9</sup> Although there are many more examples of cultic sacrifice to ouranic deities than to chthonic gods we can, nonetheless, deduce some of these inversions; and these are often present in the sacrificial practice of Near Eastern communities, particularly Hittite

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<sup>6</sup> B. J. Collins 2002: 225.

<sup>7</sup> B. J. Collins 2002: 228.

<sup>8</sup> Steiner 1971: 265.

<sup>9</sup> Tsagarakis 2000: 275.

and Anatolian practices.<sup>10</sup> As we have seen in chapter two, we must be aware that gods do not necessarily fall neatly on one side or the other of chthonic.

Animals sacrificed to ouranic deities have traditionally been viewed as being white, and we find a number of mythic narratives that specifically include a bright white animal being set aside for a god.<sup>11</sup> The majority of these sacrifices also included communal feasting of the sacrificial animal. For chthonic deities, however, sacrifice often specifically includes black animals,<sup>12</sup> as, for example, in an offering dedicated to Zeus Chthonios and Ge Chthonia from Mykonos.<sup>13</sup> In the *Odyssey*, Kirke orders Odysseus to sacrifice a ewe that is παμμέλας ('wholly black') to the dead.<sup>14</sup> Animals involved in these rites were entirely burned,<sup>15</sup> and not eaten. Similarly, ouranic worship generally took place during the daytime and chthonic worship at night.<sup>16</sup> That is not to say that all day time sacrifices involving white animals are 'ouranic' and all night time sacrifices involving dark or black animals are 'chthonic' and there are cases in which we have 'mixed' sacrifices performed;<sup>17</sup> that is, part of a sacrifice follows a 'chthonic' type and then the ritual switches and is what we might say, using the above description, is 'ouranic' or 'Olympic'. Scullion cites an example of a sacrifice to Zeus Meilichios in which there was to be no wine, a common element of so-called 'chthonic' practices, until after the sacrificial victim's

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<sup>10</sup> B. J. Collins 2002: 226.

<sup>11</sup> For example, the white bull sent by Poseidon to King Minos, who promised its return to the god in the form of sacrifice. In this story, however, the bull was not subsequently sacrificed and Minos' wife Pasiphaë, as a punishment to the king, fell in love with the bull and bore the Minotaur. See ps-Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.1.3-3.1.4. An alternative version tells that Minos was habitually sacrificing his fairest bull each year to Poseidon, however one particular year a particularly handsome bull was born and Minos instead sacrificed an inferior beast. This angered Poseidon who caused Pasiphaë to fall in love with the superior bull in punishment. See Diod. Sic. 4.77.2.

<sup>12</sup> Burkert 1985: 199; Fairbanks 1900: 246, 54, 58; Garland 1985: 112.

<sup>13</sup> Dittenberger, S.I.G. 373; Bull. Corr. Hell. XII 459f.

<sup>14</sup> Hom. *Od.* 10.525.

<sup>15</sup> Yerkes 1953: 54.

<sup>16</sup> The connection between night and death is well established. In the *Iliad* the darkness that falls upon the vision of the dying soldier is described as being like the νύξ καλύπτω 'veil of night'. See Hom. *Il.* 5.310, 659; 11.356; 13.425, 580; 14.439; and 22.466. See also, Clarke 1999: 166-68, 201 n. 185.

<sup>17</sup> cf. Henrichs 2005: 48.



offal had been burned:<sup>18</sup> οἷς νηφάλιος μέχρι σπλάγχχ[ν]ων.<sup>19</sup> Alongside this, we must remember that the Greeks themselves had no special terminology for a strictly chthonic sacrifice or sacrificial ritual.<sup>20</sup> The term ἐναγίζειν refers to sacrifices made to the dead, and is used also in the context of sacrifices to heroes, but it is never used to indicate a sacrifice to a divinity.<sup>21</sup> Chthonic sacrifice instead is described with terms like ὀλοκαυτεῖν (bring a burnt offering or offer whole), καθαγίζειν (devote or dedicate, especially of burnt offerings, or dedications for the dead), καρποῦν, (offer by way of sacrifice) and ἁγίζειν (make sacred, especially by burning a sacrifice). The fifth-century Greek could conceive of different sacrifice types: there are examples of a distinction being made between sacrifice to the heroes as opposed to the immortals, for example.<sup>22</sup> That there is no explicit vocabulary for a distinct type of sacrifice that might be viewed as 'chthonic' only indicates that this was not viewed differently from sacrifice types to other immortals. Small details might change, but these changes are not necessarily greater in number or significance than the changes in ritual processes between different ouranic or Olympic cults, sometimes even of the 'same' god. However, there is no reason that we should find a strict

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<sup>18</sup> Scullion 1994: 79.

<sup>19</sup> Daux 1963: A 41-42.

<sup>20</sup> cf. Parker 2005a: 39.

<sup>21</sup> See Pfister 1912: 466-80. cf. Parker 2005a: 38 and n. 3. The only exception to this is some vague references to ἐναγίζειν and 'chthonians' in scholia. See, for example, schol. Ap. Rh. *Argo*. 1.587.

<sup>22</sup> Parker 2005a: 37-38, 39. For example, Herodotos, when discussing the dual nature of Herakles comments:

καὶ δοκέουσι δέ μοι οὗτοι ὀρθότατα Ἑλλήνων ποιέειν, οἳ διξὰ Ἡράκλεια ἱδρυσάμενοι ἔκتهνται, καὶ τῷ μὲν ὡς ἀθανάτῳ Ὀλυμπίῳ δὲ ἐπωνυμίην θύουσι, τῷ δὲ ἐτέρῳ ὡς ἥρωι ἐναγίζουσι.

I think the best practice is that of those Greeks who have established two shrines of Herakles, and in the one case sacrifice as to an immortal under the title of Olympian, and in the other make offerings as to a hero. (Hdt. 2.44.5, trans. Parker)

However, it has been suggested that double-cults of Herakles were actually very rare. This does not necessarily change the picture of differentiation which is expounded in Herodotos Histories. See Verbanck-Piérard 1989: 43-65. The *Lex Sacra* from Selinous contains three explicit references that indicate that a sacrifice is to be made following a set pattern; one 'as to the heroes' at line A10, one 'as to the gods' at A17, and one 'as to the immortals' at B 12-13. See Jameson et al. 1993: 14-17, 29, 45.

distinction being made in the sacrificial calendars because they are, by nature, lists rather than complex how-to guides for sacrifices.<sup>23</sup>

The act of sacrifice is central to the religious experience of the Greeks, and most other ritual activity was associated with, or performed alongside, sacrifice in some way.<sup>24</sup> If there was specific sacrificial ritual undertaken for chthonic gods, as opposed to ouranic sacrifice for which there is undoubtedly more concrete evidence, this indicates that the relationship between these chthonic deities and the Greeks was not as distant as it may otherwise be made out to be. That is, the Greeks who undertook these types of sacrificial ritual activity were clearly cultivating a relationship between themselves and chthonic deities in a similar way than they may have cultivated their relationship with ouranic gods, although the frequency of 'chthonic' sacrifices may have been significantly less than those aimed at 'ouranic' gods.<sup>25</sup> Further to this, sacrifices themselves do not constitute the wholeness of religious devotion and by including votive offerings into our discussion we may find that there is a greater nuance than just 'Olympian' and 'chthonian' sacrifice types to judge the identification of a divinity. As Antonaccio comments 'the choice of votive offerings often challenges the polarities and even the identity of its recipients'.<sup>26</sup> For example, at the shrine of Helen and Menelaos at Therapne in Lakonia the presence of a large number of votives in the shape of cooking ware, including one striking example of a bronze *harpax* dedicated to Helen – an implement used in the cooking of sacrificial meat – indicates that there was the cooking and eating of sacrificial meat here.<sup>27</sup> This goes against the notion of holocaustic sacrifices for so-called chthonic cults, and hero cults certainly fit into this category.

The Nekomanteia may have been associated with the mythic rape of Persephone,<sup>28</sup> the most obvious connection between the sites and the narrative

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<sup>23</sup> Parker 2005a: 41.

<sup>24</sup> Georgoudi 2010: 92.

<sup>25</sup> cf. Henrichs 2005: 52.

<sup>26</sup> Antonaccio 2005: 100.

<sup>27</sup> Antonaccio 2005: 107.

<sup>28</sup> Ogden 2001: 25-26.

being that formed between the creation of an entrance into the Underworld through which the young maiden was snatched, and the caves with which these oracles were often associated. At the Nekyomanteion at the Acheron in Thesprotia, a number of terracotta figurines of the goddess were discovered, creating a further connection between these oracles and the queen of the dead.<sup>29</sup> The figurines include a bust of Persephone wearing a tall *polos* and veil, and some of the heads from other figures similarly wear the polos and veil. These are sometimes covered with fruit or flowers and, as Dakaris comments, 'the veil, which covers the polos, accentuates the maternal nature of the goddess'.<sup>30</sup> These, along with other finds including potsherds, on the west side of the slope of the excavation site, date back to the middle of the seventh century.<sup>31</sup> Along with these figures were terracotta figurines of Kerberos, Hades' mythic three-headed dog.

When Kirke advises Odysseus to travel εἰς Ἄϊδαο δόμους καὶ ἐπαινῆς Περσεφονείης ('into the house of Hades and dread Persephone'),<sup>32</sup> the Nekyomanteion that she sends him to matches the description of this oracle near the Acheron in Thesprotia. Pausanias comments that the Nekyomanteion in the Nekyia of the Odyssey is described in such a way because Homer had seen the oracle in Thesprotia:

Ὅμηρός τέ μοι δοκεῖ ταῦτα ἑωρακῶς ἔς τε τὴν ἄλλην ποίησιν ἀποτολμῆσαι τῶν ἐν Ἄιδου καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα τοῖς ποταμοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν Θεσπρωτίδι θέσθαι.

I think Homer had seen these places and boldly ventured to describe Hades' realm in his poem and further named the rivers after those in Thesprotia.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Dakaris 1993: 28 fig 18, 29 fig 19; Ustinova 2009: 74.

<sup>30</sup> Dakaris 1973: 27.

<sup>31</sup> Dakaris 1973: 27.

<sup>32</sup> Hom. *Od.* 10.491.

<sup>33</sup> Paus. 1.17.5. See also Johansen 1951: 35 n. 104; Tsagarakis 2000: 35, n. 104.

Homer, of course, does not indicate that Odysseus visits an actual established site, but in addition to the assertion made by Pausanias, archaeological evidence indicates that this Nekyomanteion survives in the location that Homer described.<sup>34</sup> Homer's inclusion of details from this specific Nekyomanteion may have been because there was a local emphasis on the worship of Hades as the lord of the Underworld, and a feeling that the site was particularly connected to the Underworld because of the presence of both the oracle and the cult.

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<sup>34</sup> Dakaris 1973: 148. See also Tsagarakis 2000: 43. Tsagarakis disagrees with the claim that the site of the Odyssean nekumantion is historical. Of this he says '[d]espite its fictional setting, our *Nekyia* has links with the historical world. But the necromantic link is further fictionalized in the sense that the necromantic ritual does not take place in one of the historical oracles but across the ocean, at the edge of the world, where the dead gather to enter Hades *proper*, i.e. in the land of the dead'. Regardless of the historical claim of the Odyssean nekumantion, what appears as a common theme in both arguments is that the scene is based in historical ritual practice.

## Appendix 5: Hymn to Hekate

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Hesiod *Theogony*, 411-452.

ἡ δ' ὑποκυσαμένη Ἑκάτην τέκε, τὴν περὶ πάντων  
Ζεὺς Κρονίδης τίμησε: πόρεν δέ οἱ ἀγλαὰ δῶρα,  
μοῖραν ἔχειν γαίης τε καὶ ἀτρυγέτοιο θαλάσσης.  
ἡ δὲ καὶ ἀστερόεντος ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἔμμορε τιμῆς,  
ἀθανάτοις τε θεοῖσι τετιμένη ἐστὶ μάλιστα.  
καὶ γὰρ νῦν, ὅτε πού τις ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων  
ἔρδων ἱερὰ καλὰ κατὰ νόμον ἱλάσκηται,  
κικλήσκει Ἑκάτην: πολλή τέ οἱ ἔσπετο τιμὴ  
ῥεῖα μάλ', ὧ πρόφρων γε θεὰ ὑποδέξεται εὐχάς,  
καὶ τέ οἱ ὄλβον ὀπάζει, ἐπεὶ δύναμις γε πάρεστιν.  
ὅσσοι γὰρ Γαίης τε καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἐξεγένοντο  
καὶ τιμὴν ἔλαχον, τούτων ἔχει αἶσαν ἀπάντων:  
οὐδέ τί μιν Κρονίδης ἐβίησατο οὐδέ τ' ἀπηύρα,  
ὅσσ' ἔλαχεν Τιτῇσι μέτα προτέροισι θεοῖσιν,  
ἀλλ' ἔχει, ὡς τὸ πρῶτον ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἔπλετο δασμός.  
οὐδ', ὅτι μounογενῆς, ἦσσαν θεὰ ἔμμορε τιμῆς  
καὶ γεράων γαίῃ τε καὶ οὐρανῷ ἡδὲ θαλάσσει,  
ἀλλ' ἔτι καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον, ἐπεὶ Ζεὺς τίεται αὐτήν.  
ὧ δ' ἐθέλη, μεγάλως παραγίνεται ἡδ' ὀνίνησιν:  
ἐν τε δίκη βασιλεῦσι παρ' αἰδοίοισι καθίζει,  
ἐν τ' ἀγορῇ λαοῖσι μεταπρέπει, ὃν κ' ἐθέλησιν:  
ἡδ' ὁπότε ἔς πόλεμον φθισήνορα θωρήσσωνται  
ἀνέρες, ἔνθα θεὰ παραγίνεται, οἷς κ' ἐθέλησι  
νίκην προφρονέως ὀπάσαι καὶ κῦδος ὀρέξαι.  
ἐσθλὴ δ' ἱππῆεσσι παρεστάμεν, οἷς κ' ἐθέλησιν:  
ἐσθλὴ δ' αὖθ' ὁπότε ἄνδρες ἀεθλεύωσ' ἐν ἀγῶνι:  
ἐνθα θεὰ καὶ τοῖς παραγίνεται ἡδ' ὀνίνησι:  
νικήσας δὲ βίῃ καὶ κάρτει, καλὸν ἄεθλον  
ῥεῖα φέρει χαίρων τε, τοκεῦσι δὲ κῦδος ὀπάζει.  
καὶ τοῖς, οἳ γλαυκὴν δυσπέμφελον ἐργάζονται,  
εὖχονται δ' Ἑκάτῃ καὶ ἐρικτύπῳ ἐννοσιγαίῳ,  
ῥηϊδίως ἄγρην κυδρὴ θεὸς ὥπασε πολλήν,  
ῥεῖα δ' ἀφείλετο φαινομένην, ἐθέλουσά γε θυμῷ.  
ἐσθλὴ δ' ἐν σταθμοῖσι σὺν Ἑρμῇ ληϊδ' ἀέξειν:  
βουκολίας δὲ βοῶν τε καὶ αἰπόλια πλατέ' αἰγῶν  
ποίμνας τ' εἰροπόκων ὄϊων, θυμῷ γ' ἐθέλουσα,  
ἐξ ὀλίγων βριάει κάκ πολλῶν μείονα θῆκεν.

οὕτω τοι καὶ μουνογενὴς ἐκ μητρὸς ἐοῦσα  
πᾶσι μετ' ἀθανάτοισι τετίμηται γεράεσσι.  
Θῆκε δέ μιν Κρονίδης κουροτρόφον, οἷ μετ' ἐκείνην  
ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἴδοντο φάος πολυδερκέος Ἡοῦς.  
οὕτως ἐξ ἀρχῆς κουροτρόφος, αἷ δέ τε τιμαί.

And she became pregnant and bore Hekate, whom Zeus, Kronos' son, honoured above all others: he gave her splendid gifts – to have a share of the earth and of the barren sea, and from the starry sky as well she has a share in honour, and is honoured most of all by the immortal gods. For even now, whenever any human on the earth seeks propitiation by performing fine sacrifices according to custom, he invokes Hekate; and much honour very easily stays with that man whose prayers the goddess accepts with gladness, and she bestows happiness upon him, for this power she certainly has. For of all those who came forth from Earth and Sky and received honour, among all of these she has her due share; and neither did Kronos' son use force against her nor did he deprive her of anything that she had received as her portion among the Titans, the earlier gods, but she is still in possession according to the division as it was made at first from the beginning. Nor does the goddess, just because she is an only child, have a lesser share of honour and privileges on earth and in sky and sea, but instead she has far more, since Zeus honours her. She stands mightily at the side of whomever she wishes and helps him. In the assembly, whoever she wishes is conspicuous among the people; and when men arm themselves for man-destroying war, the goddess stands there by the side of whomever she wishes, zealously to grant victory and to stretch forth glory. She sits in judgement beside reverend kings; and again, she is good whenever men are competing in an athletic contest – there the goddess stands by their side too and helps them, and when someone has gained victory by force and supremacy he easily and joyfully carries off a fine prize and grants glory to his parents; and she is good at standing by the side of horsemen, whomever she wishes. And upon those who work the bright, storm-tossed sea and pray to Hekate and the loud-sounding Earth-shaker, the illustrious goddess easily bestows a big haul of fish, and easily she takes it away once it has been seen, if she so wishes in her spirit. And she is good in the stables at increasing the livestock together with Hermes; and the herds and droves of cattle, and the broad flocks of goats and the flocks of woolly sheep, if in her spirit she so wishes, from a few she strengthens them and from many she makes them fewer. And so, even though she is an only child from her mother, she is honoured with privileges among all the immortals. And Kronos' son made her the nurse of all the children who after her see with their eyes the light of much-seeing Dawn. Thus, since the beginning she is a nurse, and these are her honours. (trans. Most).



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